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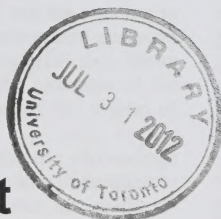


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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament



## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 19 July 2012

### Standing Committee on Estimates

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care

Chair: Michael Prue  
Clerk: Valerie Quioc Lim

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 19 juillet 2012

### Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Ministère des Finances

Ministère de la Santé  
et des Soins de longue durée

Président : Michael Prue  
Greffière : Valerie Quioc Lim



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES

Thursday 19 July 2012

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Jeudi 19 juillet 2012

*The committee met at 0802 in room 151.*

## MINISTRY OF FINANCE

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I call the meeting to order. Good morning, committee members and everyone else who's here on this fine and wonderful day. We're here today for the consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Finance, which was selected for a total of seven and a half hours of review.

The ministry is required to monitor the proceedings for any questions or issues that the ministry undertakes to address. I trust that the deputy minister has made arrangements to have the hearings closely monitored with respect to questions raised so that the ministry can respond accordingly. If you wish, you may, at the end of your appearance, verify the questions and issues being tracked by the research officers.

I will now call vote 1201. We will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minutes by the minister, followed by statements of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition and the third party. Then the minister will have up to 30 minutes for a reply. The remaining time will be apportioned equally among the three parties.

So, over to the minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No statement.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No statement.

Official opposition, do you have a statement?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Absolutely.

Good morning. Thank you for joining us, Minister.

I know you oversee the province's finances, but I'd like to remind you that Ontario is now at \$266 billion worth of debt. That's \$266 billion coming off a year in which you ran a \$15-billion deficit.

You would think, in light of these numbers, the government would immediately work to reduce the deficit in order to take Ontario off its collision course with a \$30-billion deficit which your own hand-picked economist Don Drummond forecast would be the price of inaction. But, Minister, as you so strikingly demonstrated to us earlier this year, these numbers didn't and still don't faze you in the slightest. Why else would you present the Legislature with a budget that raises spending in 14 of 24 ministries and keeps the deficit unchanged at \$15 billion? Why else would two serious credit downgrades from Moody's and Standard and Poor's not get you to act? I think if anything is clear, it's that you and your Liberal

government are intent on digging our province deeper and deeper into debt.

Now, we've all learned you say you plan to reduce spending over the long term. You say, "Don't worry about it. We'll get to it later." But the expenses just keep piling up. Just last week, we learned your Liberal seat-saver program to cancel the Mississauga power plant is already going to cost the province \$190 million. Minister, I'm sure the cost is much, much more, but I'm sure we'll get to that a bit later.

Now, we also learned from the Minister of Energy that you didn't include this cost in your budget and you'll be pulling the money from an emergency reserve. Why this \$190-million expense wasn't properly costed in the budget is a concern we'll also address later today.

But, Minister, I want to start by asking you, how can the Ontario people have any confidence in your government to run this province's finances when you continue to dig us deeper into debt, ignore warnings from major credit rating agencies, and fail to plan for major expenditures like the \$190-million relocation of the Mississauga power plant?

I'll leave it to you, Minister, to address that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** [*inaudible*] re-elected us last October.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You'll have to wait, because these are the opening statements. You've made an opening statement. The minister may respond, but Mr. Bisson has the floor next for up to a half-hour, if you have a statement to make.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I would like to use my time in questioning.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. I've been reminded it is your half-hour.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We could add the balance to our questioning though, can we not? Because yesterday in public accounts they were adding the balance to questioning.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** The minister declined to make a statement. You then had an opportunity to make a statement. The NDP does not wish to make a statement.

We are going to go right into questioning. I will recognize you next, unless—the minister now has a chance to rebut or make any—

*Interjection.*



**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And he chooses not to. Now it is your questioning. You may ask any questions. You have 20 minutes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. Well, based on that initial statement that I had made, I'll ask that question again; he will have a better chance to answer now that he's heard it for the second time. So I'll ask the minister again: How can the Ontario people have any confidence in your government to run the province's finances when you continue to dig us deeper into debt, ignore warnings from major credit rating agencies and fail to plan for major expenditures like the \$190-million relocation of the Mississauga power plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think last October the people of Ontario, Mr. Chair, put their confidence in us. I think that was about eight months ago. I think they see beyond what I would call the sort of talking points that are written by people in backrooms. I think they recognize that Ontario has come through a very difficult recession. I think they recognize that we've taken the deficit from just over \$19 billion down to approximately \$15 billion, and I will be reporting out at public accounts with respect to last year.

I think the Legislature passed the government's budget. The budget was a confidence measure. I think the Legislature expressed the confidence of the people of Ontario there.

I don't share your view with respect to Ontario's position, nor do the credit rating agencies. You have mischaracterized what they have said. I'll read into the record later on some of the more salient comments from the credit rating agencies.

I think Ontarians recognize that as we move back to deficit, we don't want to close schools and hospitals. They recognize that investments in public services are important to a better future, particularly in education, particularly in health care.

I think they recognize that, for instance, the federal government has increased spending, increased its debt, increased its deficit. Its deficit-to-GDP is slightly lower than ours, but on the same order of magnitude. Total debt has risen.

I would remind my colleagues as well that if you look at Ontario over the last generation, four governments of three political stripes have all, in their turn, almost doubled the debt, each time. In good times, say from 1995 to 2003, when we experienced real growth in the North American economy of over 5% most years, the debt increased 40%.

So I agree: We do have to address the debt. We've laid out a plan to do that. It is carefully costed out. We, for instance, would not close schools the way you would. We would not close hospitals or cut funding to community health centres the way you would.

Mr. Drummond, a couple of weeks ago, said we were actually making good progress, as have the credit rating agencies.

**0810**

I think Ontarians recognize that the global economy and the circumstances the global economy is in have challenged not just Ontario; certainly, virtually every industrial jurisdiction in North America has experienced the same thing. Again, the government of Canada and other governments of all political stripes have faced the same thing.

Our numbers reflect the reality of Ontario. Our plan is to get back to budget; we are on track to do that. We laid out a plan two budgets ago, and we have achieved the targets. In fact, we have more than achieved the targets in each of those years. I'm confident that as we move forward, the numbers will continue to improve, while at the same time we're able to maintain important investments in health and education.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Minister. At the end of my question, I highlighted the \$190-million cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga power plant. I'll now turn it over to my colleague, who I know has some questions pertaining to that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Good morning, Minister. Just off the top, I want to thank you for joining us today.

Minister, on Monday, you contradicted testimony provided to the committee by the energy minister. With this new information that you provided to us, and given the importance of getting to the bottom of this serious matter, will you voluntarily table documents that you have in your office and at the Ministry of Finance that pertain to the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are a range of documents that are available through the Ministry of Energy, and that is the lead ministry, so I would recommend that that question would be more appropriately put to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, we feel, Minister, that you do have access to the financial—because after all, you are the Minister of Finance for the province of Ontario. We need to be open and honest with this committee, and of course, we need you to co-operate with us as well.

But since you're refusing, or deferring it to another department, let's talk about some of the campaign decisions in the last election that were very evident to many.

The first question I have for you, Minister, is a very simple one: Were you a part of any of the campaign decisions?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** When Mr. Hudak urged us to move the plant and Ms. Horwath urged us to move the plant—all campaigns took decisions in this regard—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I might add, Minister, though—sorry for the interjection—I don't believe it was a case of Mr. Hudak urging you to move the plant. We wouldn't have put that plant there in the first place, just for the record.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But you did say you'd move it, and I presume that you would have to pay to move it. You applauded us when we did it. You said it was the right decision to do. That's what you said.



**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Were you a part of that campaign decision, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was a proud part of our campaign, absolutely. I had lawn signs up; I knocked on doors; I got re-elected—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I did.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. When did you become aware of the fact that you were going to be moving, or at least cancelling—let's not say "moving" right now—the Mississauga power plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was a campaign commitment made—I don't recall the date; it would have been during that campaign period—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So it was a Liberal campaign decision to close the Mississauga power plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, it was a campaign commitment. It was not a government decision. When we were re-elected, at that point we had to either proceed with the undertaking—which we did.

I do need to go back: There will be a full accounting, from finance's perspective, of all of this, likely when I table Q2 accounts, which will come in the early fall—I'm sorry; October, Deputy?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Yes, around that time.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** October. It's all ready. We are required to report publicly on all of these matters. I don't want to leave that hanging.

We made a number of campaign undertakings. For instance, I'm looking forward to moving on the tax credit. I think you people called it a foreigners' tax credit. We're going to move on that. We didn't agree with your position on that.

We made a number of other decisions during the campaign and in the lead-up to the campaign. We published a campaign document. We listened to the people in the Mississauga/Etobicoke area. There was strong local opposition. We, in fact, took the advice of both opposition parties, moved forward, made a campaign commitment. But, in fact, it was the government—and there was a whole range of decisions that had to be taken after the election by the re-elected government, and that's what we did.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So, in fact, then, it was a Liberal campaign decision involving yourself and other, I suspect, cabinet ministers to close the Mississauga power plant, ironically, a couple of weeks prior to the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It was a campaign commitment, but had we not been re-elected, obviously, we couldn't—it takes the government to implement.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** When was that decision—you say it was a campaign commitment. When did that actually become a campaign commitment, sir? Because all along, prior to—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** During the campaign. I don't remember the day.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You're not sure when. Okay.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, no; I said during the campaign. So it would have been—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Within 30 days, roughly.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It would have been prior to election day, but after the writ. I just don't recall the day.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. If you could get back to us on that, I would appreciate that, sir.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think you can look it up in the newspaper.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you.

Were you aware that as early as February 2011, the Premier had a meeting with Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion saying that he would cancel the Mississauga power plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I know the Premier and I both meet—in fact, I had a nice conversation with Mayor McCallion last evening. She's out on vacation in her hometown in the Gaspé. Mayor McCallion is a terrific Ontarian. The Premier meets with and talks to mayors, municipal leaders from across the province, on a regular basis. Mayor McCallion is not one to shy away from her positions. We were talking yesterday about a court case involving Pearson airport and the leases at Pearson airport which MPAC and Mississauga are appealing to Divisional Court based on a decision that would impact on Mississauga's revenue.

So I can't confirm when he spoke to her. I know he speaks to her frequently, as I do. I don't know—I'm not privy to what's discussed. I can tell you that Mayor McCallion and others from Mississauga did make representations to your leader and to the NDP about their wish to see that plant relocated.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We have information stating that that meeting did, in fact, occur back in February between Mayor McCallion and the Premier. Assuming—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I should say there has probably been more than one meeting between Mayor McCallion and the Premier, and there would have been meetings before February. I know she meets and talks to the leadership of your party on a fairly regular basis—you're now in possession of letters from her with respect to what I just spoke about, for instance—as she does with other political leaders.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Are you suggesting we shouldn't be meeting with mayors and hearing their opinion?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That's not what I'm suggesting at all, sir.

If this meeting did, in fact, happen back in February 2011, I guess one of our questions, sir, would be, what took so long? What took so long? Would it not have reduced the \$190-million price tag if your colleagues had acted faster? Again, February to October or late September: There are a number of months in there where construction continued, costs continued to rise. Had that decision been made sooner, sir, I would assume that the \$190 million that you claim is the cost for the Mississauga gas plant would be considerably less.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can't answer; I don't know. I don't know the answer to that. What I do know is it's



considerably less than the \$1 billion your leader said it would cost to relocate the plant. So would making the decision in February have changed the relocating costs? I don't know the answer to that. I can't give you that. I'm not in the business of moving gas plants.

What I can tell you is this: Once we had made the decision, the company continued to build, and I suspect they would have taken the same tactic had we announced in February—whenever we had done it. I can't give you an accurate answer to that question because it's not one that I have any expertise in.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, just for the record, Minister, the comment of our leader, Mr. Hudak, with regard to the \$1 billion was in reference to the Oakville, not the Mississauga, gas plant.

0820

Again, we'll be talking to you a little bit more later on with regard to your numbers of \$100 million, the cost for the Mississauga gas plant, because, quite frankly, sir, I think we need to challenge you on that.

What I'd like to do now, sir, is to turn it back over my colleague Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, last week you contradicted your colleague the Minister of Energy when you said that it was in fact the Premier and not the Liberal campaign team who decided to cancel the Mississauga power plant. Exactly when did you find out about the Premier's decision to cancel the Mississauga gas plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There would have been a cabinet minute, because a campaign promise, if you're not the government, you can't implement, unless you want to co-operate and make the—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So this was a discussion of the cabinet, then?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But during our time in estimates—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Up until the election—remember, when a writ comes down, the government is dissolved. There's no Legislature. Implementation would require the government to do it. The government had been dissolved. Cabinet can't take decisions. There are certain emergency powers available in extraordinary circumstances, but once the writ has come down, there is no longer a Legislature, therefore there is no longer a government. You can do certain housekeeping things, as I understand it, but, in fact, there had to be a decision of the government that went through the normal cabinet processes.

There was a campaign commitment, absolutely. The Minister of Energy was absolutely correct about that. But, in fact, had we not been re-elected, we could not have proceeded with that commitment. It required a decision of the government of the day, the government that was elected in October, to follow up with that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Were you part of that campaign decision to make that commitment to relocate?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was not, personally. I was not on the campaign team or campaign committee.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Who was, in fact, on that team that would have been part of that decision, then? Was the Premier—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, I wasn't privy to it. Obviously, any campaign undertaking would have been approved by the Premier, which is exactly what I said on Monday. Anything on that order of magnitude—well, in this case, it would have been the leader of the party, because a campaign document is not a government document.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Are campaign commitments run past ministers or members of the executive council?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not individually, because government resources aren't used to make those—often, like I'm sure in your caucus, we'll bandy things around in caucus, discuss issues; caucus members will have the opportunity to put forward views on issues in the hopes that the leader of the party will incorporate that into a campaign document.

By the way, I think you know how it works: If we think the opposition has a good idea, we'll look at it and we might incorporate it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We had a lot of good ideas, actually, back in the fall and, unfortunately, come budget time, you weren't interested in implementing any of them. That's why we voted against your budget.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Unfortunately, the people of Ontario didn't concur with that opinion. What I would say is—and, by the way, we did. Certain parts of the budget were taken right out of your campaign document.

Listen, you make your decisions based on the overall budget; I respect that. All I'm suggesting is that every campaign puts together certain undertakings; campaigns announce positions—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Right. Based on that, exactly when did you find out about the cancellation or the potential relocation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As I indicated earlier, sometime after the writ was dropped and before election day. I don't remember the day—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But you'll get back to us on that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I can—it was 31 days; it's somewhere in that period of time.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So you were part of that—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Was it October 4 at 5:30 p.m.? I can't remember. But it was subsequent to the writ and prior to the election.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Did they ask you your opinion of doing so, and did they involve you in potentially some of the costs that—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not in the campaign period, no.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You were not asked to provide your—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our caucus, over the years, had discussed a range of energy issues, many of which were controversial. We often discuss these issues—not just the relocation, but a whole bunch of things. I remem-

ber that the Hearn plant was very controversial a number of years ago, and others: Mattagami, getting that off the ground, which is a very important thing. Doing the Niagara tunnel: We had huge discussions about that. As a caucus, as the Liberal caucus, we often discuss these issues, I think it's fair to say. As a cabinet, we have a different responsibility. As I say, it was a campaign undertaking. When we formed government—folks have often accused us of making undertakings and not fulfilling them. This time, we felt that it was appropriate, given the fact that both opposition parties publicly advocated to move the plant. We proceeded to take the necessary approvals of the government to put in place the mechanisms we needed to try to mitigate the obvious liabilities that would accrue as a result of the decision to relocate. We proceeded, and fulfilled our undertaking.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Don't you think that a \$190-million line item should be at least run by the finance minister prior to making such a large commitment in terms of how it would affect Ontario's fiscal situation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As I said, we had a number—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Prior to making that commitment?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We had a number of discussions about this issue over the years. I forget the year that this contract was originally awarded. I think it was 2004 or 2005. I don't recall specifically.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You had discussions on relocating the plant for several years?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You had discussions on the relocation of the plant for several years?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, on this particular company. There have been a number of issues involving this company over time. Obviously this issue had been a contentious issue in the western part of the GTA. Like everyone else, I assume you folks talked about it in your caucus. We had ongoing discussions.

The budgets are built. Any budget has reserve contingency throughout to accommodate these kinds of undertakings. It was not unusual, in the sense that the real decision wasn't taken until after the election.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You mentioned budgeting for these items. In the 2011-12 budget, it actually itemizes, for example, emergency forest firefighting at roughly \$200 million; affordable housing at \$60 million; and Pan Am Games investments at roughly \$60 million. Don't you think a \$190-million expenditure is significant? And why wasn't it included in your estimates?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There is contingency. For instance, you cited firefighting. Yesterday or the day before yesterday we approved moving money out of contingency into forest firefighting because we've had a particularly bad season. As well, I understand, we've sent crews to other jurisdictions to assist there.

There is considerable reserve and contingency built in the budget. There are explicit lines that we're very readily able to see, and yes, governments do move money in and out of contingency regularly. It goes in and out, by

the way, so sometimes there will be an underspend somewhere and you'll move that money into contingency. If you take the opportunity to look at the quarterly reports as well as the fall update, you'll see where those changes happen. The auditor looks at these things. It's quite a regular occurrence. On a budget the size of Ontario's—\$125 billion less interest on debt; probably \$116 billion or \$115 billion—you're going to have variances across lines over a year, particularly in areas—for instance, one thing I'm concerned about that I know will be of grave concern to all members is what's happening with our crops this summer in the drought. Down our way, there's deep concern. We now have a risk management program in place which I think will be a great help this season.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I can imagine. So, Minister, just back to the—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** These contingencies and reserves are built in in order to accommodate changing circumstances.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So will that actual \$190 million be included in the fall economic statement as a clearly defined item? Is it \$180 million or is it \$190 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It will be in our Q2 accounts, so therefore it probably won't be captured there, but it will be certainly part of the audited financial statements. It's material. The auditor will look at it and report on it.

0830

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Will it be \$190 million or \$180 million? Or will it be more?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, \$180 million for relocation costs, yes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Last week, you announced it would be \$190 million, correct? Will it be \$190 million, the total expenditure to the Ontario taxpayer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not related to relocation, but in terms of the dealings with this particular company, yes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Can Ontario taxpayers expect this relocation cost to increase beyond the \$180 million or \$190 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The relocation cost wasn't \$190 million. The relocation cost was \$180 million. There was an additional \$10 million that I described on Monday that are part of the government's relationship with this company. They have other obligations, we have other obligations, and in the interest of clarity, we simply pointed out that that money was there. The relocation costs remain \$180 million, and that additional \$10 million was in regard to another outstanding legal matter that was an involvement with this company that was apart from the relocating costs.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Just over a minute.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Could we add it to our next rotation, then?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** What are you trying to do?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Add the extra minute to our time next time.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Just finish it.



**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. We'll pass it off to our colleagues in the NDP, then.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, thanks. I'll take their minute. No, no, just joking.

So I guess I'm supposed to say welcome; I hope you had a nice night and I hope the coffee's still warm.

Let's get to the Mississauga gas plant. The first question I have is, there's the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. that falls under your ministry, right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, that is accurate.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Were they involved at all in regard to the settlement with Eastern Power?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** With respect to the relocation costs, was OEFC involved? No.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh. Well, we have an email here in what was provided by the Minister of Energy from one Michael Killeavy. He's the director of contract management at the OPA. He sent an email to JoAnne Butler, who is the vice-president, electricity resources, and it reads, "Colin will not go beyond amount we discussed. It sounds like OEFC has actively involved"—pardon the grammar; it's not mine, it's the way it was written—"in these negotiations which limited OEFC set on the payout Eastern Power."

It goes on in the response from Butler, saying on November 19, "Then at some point we have to think about getting the Keele Valley contract. Asked Colin to ask OEFC to ask Greg to let them give us a copy."

It's pretty clear that they are involved in the process. So you can understand my question.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To what degree have they been involved in the discussions around the settlement?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There's two separate issues. The one you're referring to goes back to a NUG contract with this company that was subject to a legal dispute.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And that's a non-utility generator contract, just so we don't just talk in acronyms.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Absolutely—which was, I think, entered into in 1994. There has been outstanding litigation with respect to that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's the one at Keele?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, Keele Valley. So there's outstanding litigation with respect to that, and that's where that additional \$10 million came in. Not to put too fine a point on it, but the reason we felt it was important to make sure the public knew about that \$10 million was, although it wasn't part of the relocation, it was part of dealings we had with this company overall. The OEFC was involved in the administration of that but they were not involved in the—because they have responsibility now for the administration of the NUGs contract. Is that correct?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Exactly.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But they were not involved in the decision or the settlement of the relocation costs.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you're saying that \$10 million related to Keele had nothing to do with Oakville or Mississauga.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's with the company.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I know; I understand they're one and the same.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So the reason we wanted that number out, Gilles, was because one could reasonably assume that—even though it didn't—our ability to resolve other issues would impact on the willingness or the ability of the company to deal in good faith and try to minimize the costs associated with relocation.

So they were two separate matters, but I think one could reasonably conclude that, in order to resolve the bigger one—before you could get to that, you may want to resolve the smaller one. I think that's fair to say.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** As to the \$180 million, how did that come up? What's the accounting for that \$180 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Ontario Power Authority did that, Gilles. We could, I suppose, defer that to them and pass on that kind of inquiry to the Ontario Power Authority.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Could you please provide this committee with the details as to the \$180 million? How did they get up to that number? Was it so much for cancellation, so much for this, so much for that? That \$180 million—what it all means.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We can follow up with energy on that, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And you'll get that to us. All right. This was essentially a decision in order to save that riding. That's essentially what that was all about, right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think it was a decision that reflected the will of the people of Etobicoke and Mississauga, one that all three of the political parties concurred in.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So the point is, though—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And we now have a willing host, as I understand it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Is this a riding that you held, for the record?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It wasn't a riding; it was a range of ridings. But the decision was not about that decision—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right, let me try the question another way. Were there Liberal incumbents in the areas that were affected by this gas plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think they would have been re-elected with or without this decision.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think what our government did—well, I mean, if you want to speculate about electoral outcomes, I'll speculate about electoral outcomes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, it's okay. That's fair—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But let me finish, because you've asked the question. It's a legitimate question. The people of Etobicoke and Mississauga, en masse—Liberals, New Democrats and Conservatives—objected to this site. The leader of your party, the leader of the Progressive Conservative party, the leader of the Liberal

party—the Premier—all made campaign undertakings to move the plant. We did make the original decision, so we bear responsibility for that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So my point is that you decided to reverse yourself on this in the middle of the campaign because of political consideration: yes or no?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We decided to respect the overwhelming opinion we were hearing from the people of Etobicoke and Mississauga. And by the way, I'm happy that we found a willing host municipality.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I think you probably would have been able to find—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, Mayor Bradley of Sarnia was quite complimentary, and he's not normally complimentary of this government. I was very pleased that Sarnia-Lambton, which had a number of difficulties in the last few years, was a willing host. The power enters the grid at the appropriate place. We can still feed the western GTA through that.

Do politicians respond to public will? Yes, absolutely.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's exactly what we do. That's the institution of Parliament.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, we all do.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But my point is that it's pretty clear to say that—so this did result in an expenditure of \$180 million, right; this decision?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, for relocation.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So let me ask you, as a parochial northern politician: If you can come up with \$180 million to save a couple of seats in Mississauga, why the hell couldn't you come up with \$26 million to run a railway in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The railway number is completely inaccurate. It's approaching a \$100-million-a-year subsidy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're not answering my question.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It can be better run. Northerners know it's not well run—about 17% occupancy of the railway.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Would you—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We're divesting, and I believe, when this is through, we will have better service to northerners.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We've seen this picture before. We lost the air arm of—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm quite pleased with the new smelter that's going into northern Ontario as well.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We'll see if that one happens. I hope it does, but that's a whole other question. Let's get back to the thing. The point I'm making is—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Just if I may, though, just to set the record straight: In the addendum, you'll find the accurate numbers. The three-year total cost avoidance is in the order of magnitude of \$265.9 million. That's to run a train that only has 17% occupancy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We'll get to the numbers on the ONTC a little bit later. The point that I'm asking is this—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And their expenses have risen 274% since 2003.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We're going to come to that in a minute. We'll come to that in a minute. I can argue those numbers quite easily.

My point is, did you not make a decision for the last election, for political reasons, that cost the taxpayers \$180 million? The answer was: Yes, you made the decision.

**0840**

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We responded—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Number two—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, let me correct the record. I did not say—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm not trying to be combative. Let me ask the question.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I said was all three political parties supported relocating the plant. They—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And all three political parties supported the ONTC. The Premier signed a pledge and said he would never privatize it—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They heard the people of Etobicoke and Mississauga, and our government responded, once we were re-elected, based on the campaign undertaking that we had made.

If I may, in 2003, we did make an undertaking to try to make the ONTC work. We have increased expenses by 273% over that time. Ridership has continued to go down. We are divesting, and what will be left will be a better service for northerners and one that is affordable and—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** There's not a mayor in northern Ontario, there's not a chamber of commerce in northern Ontario, there's hardly a citizen, that agrees with you, but that's beside the point.

My question is to you is this: If your government was able to make a decision to cancel the construction of gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville so far for which the bill is \$180 million and climbing, why can't you come up with a subsidy to Ontario Northland for \$26 million a year?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's not \$26 million a year.

What we're doing is we're building a new smelter up north. We made huge investments in northern roads. There's a lot of indirect provincial money involved in that. Second of all, we've put a new medical school up north, a new law school, roads, hospitals, schools. That's where our priority is. The new university in Sault Ste. Marie is going to be extremely important—all of these investments in the north.

I think we'll have a better service when we get out of—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, nobody argues that the government of Ontario shouldn't be making investments across Ontario in post-secondary education or the health system or whatever it might be.

The point that I want to make is—and rather than a question, I'll make a statement and then I'll go on to the rest of the questions—to people sitting in northern Ontario watching this government's decisions, they find it very irritating, to say the very least, that the government



can come up with \$180 million in order to save a couple of seats in the Toronto area, but yet they cannot provide a basic subsidy to run transportation infrastructure in northern Ontario. You are, in my view, doing more to fan the feelings of anger against the province and against this Legislature and against your government by doing that than is necessary, but that's a whole other point.

We'll go back to the ONTC in another round.

Let me just get back to where we were at on the Ministry of Finance and the gas plant. What financial compensation was provided to Eastern Power in order to get their agreement in 2001 to stop the construction?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm sorry; you referred to 2001?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Excuse me; 2011.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Could you just give me the question again? I apologize.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** What financial compensation was provided to Eastern Power in order to secure their agreement in 2011 to cease the construction activities at the Mississauga gas plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The relocation amount of \$180 million.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's it? No more?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We put out the other \$10 million because that settlement made it easier to precipitate a settlement on the relocation cost, so one could indirectly say, yes, that that was part of it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Do you expect any more money to be spent in order to deal with this little cancellation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Cancellation or relocation?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Relocation—well, they're not building it anymore.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not directly for the relocation.

The other thing to bear in mind: On the relocation costs, there could be variances there, for instance, positive or negative. Those costs are agreed-to estimates. Oftentimes, there are variances on a project of that order of magnitude: it could come in at \$178 million; it could come in at \$182 million.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Is the government, beyond the \$180 million, expecting to have to pay for anything else in order to settle this particular issue with the constructor?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not the relocation—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** What about any penalties?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —not that we're aware of.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Penalties in the contract—there was obviously a contract signed between—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The relocation costs, as I understand it—and these questions, again, would have to go to energy—the \$180 million covers all of those costs. It covers them all off.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you're not expecting anything else other than minor variances over the \$180 million on Mississauga?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** On relocation, absolutely. Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Do you expect any additional claims on penalties?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. The \$180 million should cover all of that. That was part of the comprehensive agreement.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Did the OPA provide an adder to the Eastern Power Keele Valley power plant contract as part of its agreement?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll have to refer that to the Ministry of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can you get us an answer to that question, please? For the record, again, did OPA provide an adder to the Eastern Power Keele Valley power plant contract as part of this agreement? Please provide all of the details. If you could provide that, please.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Prior to the election announcement to relocate that plant, did OEFC provide the government with estimates of costs and what forgone revenue would be associated with relocation of the plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not to my recollection, but I'll undertake to check and get back to you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If you were provided with—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It may not have been provided to me. It may have been provided to energy. I don't have a recollection, Gilles, but we'll see. I'll undertake to get back to you on that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Give me that information and any details related to it.

What efforts were made by the OEFC and the Ministry of Finance more broadly to minimize the cost to the taxpayer? Did you guys try to figure out—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Minimize the cost of what? The relocation?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The relocation, yes. And any penalties that are associated.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As I indicated earlier, that wasn't undertaken by the OEFC. That was undertaken by the Ontario Power Authority, so the OEFC was not involved in that.

With respect to the legal issues around the NUGs agreement, this was a long-outstanding legal matter where there was considerable risk to the taxpayer on either outcome. There has been a history of litigation with this particular company. I believe, from my understanding of this particular lawsuit, that over time it wasn't resolved because of the difference of opinion and that there was risk to the taxpayer, regardless of the outcome.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But were there any efforts made by your ministry or OEFC in order to try to mitigate our losses? That was my question.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm sure over the years there were. This legal matter—Deputy, I can't recall how long it was outstanding, but it was many years and there were many efforts made before legal action was taken.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Did you want to add?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Yes, if I can. Eastern Power had launched, related to the non-utility generator power purchase agreement—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The Keele?



**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The Keele Valley. Ontario Hydro entered into that in the early 1990s.

They launched two court actions—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Eastern did?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Eastern did, to the original contract that Ontario Hydro entered into: one in 1996 that they didn't pursue further, and one in 1998. Over the course of more than 13 years, that was litigated in the Superior Court and then went to the Court of Appeal. In the original Superior Court decision, the judge found that of all their asks, only one had merit. That was, when Ontario Hydro entered into that contract, they had a program in place that they offered to other generators, non-utility—NUG—contracts, of what they call an inter-area transition credit. So the judge found that all their other claims had no merit. This one did, but they didn't determine the amount of what the damage would be. So that was still subject to further litigation.

Eastern Power appealed to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal agreed that there were damages they couldn't estimate, and then scheduled further hearings to determine the amount that Eastern Power would be owed because that original Ontario Hydro contract was underpricing the energy or electricity they were supplying.

0850

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So the \$10 million in regard to the Keele part of this: Why was the announcement made in July? Why was it done now? That's a bit of a mystery to me. Why did you choose now? You've known for a while that this is going on, so why did you raise it in the context of the Mississauga relocation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As I indicated, we felt that in the interest of transparency—this was part of an ongoing legal dispute, and in the interest of complete transparency on this, we felt that you, the opposition, the Legislature and, through you, the people of Ontario should be aware of this. It wasn't directly linked to the relocation but it was another dealing with this company.

Deputy, did you want to add to that?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Just in terms of: as part of the settlement—so this was tracking for a court review to determine the punitive damages. The OEFC agreed to settle at the \$10-million amount, but it was subject to the concurrence of other matters related to the company. The money wouldn't have been concluded until those other matters were settled. That was all part of a court settlement which all parties were embargoed from discussing until those matters were recently settled.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And they were just recently settled.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'll come back to this a little bit later.

You said on Monday that the \$180 million would not increase your deficit because it was in your contingency fund. Does that mean that you knew that the payout was \$180 million before you put your budget together?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, but you'll see there's a much larger figure of contingency in each year's budget. We don't know where any of these will land, necessarily.

For instance, on a much smaller scale, yesterday or the day before, I had to move money from contingency to firefighting—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How much is the contingency, again?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** How much is it this year?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** About \$500 million.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's \$500 million this year.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you're saying you didn't know at the time that you drafted the budget that the figure would be \$180 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's absolutely correct.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The \$180 million doesn't appear anywhere except under the contingency. If I try to account for the \$180 million—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Right now, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —I'd have to look in that \$500 million. So it's \$500 million less \$180 million—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And it's not broken out. So yes, you're accurate. It does not show right now, but it will. At the time of the budget, we didn't know what it was.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And the same thing with the \$10 million for the Keele Valley—is that where that's coming from, out of contingency?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's through the OEFC and from the rate base, so that may not show. Deputy?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** In the determination of the \$180 million and then the additional \$10 million, our understanding is, it will be applied to the tax base. It's how it's recorded, because they are separate, individual transactions.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Hold it. I've got to get you to back up. The \$180 million or the \$10 million? I didn't hear.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Both.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Both?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Go to the tax base, and they will be recorded separately because they're separate items.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. The \$10 million is coming out of the contingency?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, effectively.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** When the Liberal Party made that decision during the election, did they have any idea what the number was going to be?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We had a range of numbers, I think it's fair to say. You don't know these things and you don't know how long they'll get tied up in litigation. That's why, after the election, the government then had to make a decision as to—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, but you said—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me just finish, to try to answer your question as completely as I can. The government then had to make a determination as to how to proceed, what the potential range of costs would be—there was speculation all over the place about what it would be—and we didn't know until we actually sat down and talked to the company through the Ontario Power Authority. Those discussions didn't begin until well after the

election, as I understand it. We'll have to confirm the date.

I became aware of what looked like the \$180-million relocation not that long ago because it has been subject to ongoing discussion.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You said you had a range of numbers that the Liberal Party was aware of, I take it, probably based on the OEFC, or somebody made up those numbers. What was the range?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, it would not be the government—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I have two questions; I'll get to that one in a minute. The first question is, what was the range of numbers that the Liberal Party had? They, as we did, had to account in their platform for how they would balance the budget by 2017-18; \$180 million is a lot of money when it comes to that. So what was the range they were working on? They thought it was—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll have to get back to you on that, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Could you provide us the range?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes. And I want to be clear: That range of numbers did not come from the public service. This was an undertaking of the Liberal campaign.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, but they would have had to base that from somewhere, right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, and I'll have to get back to you. I will get back to you as to the range, where it shows in the campaign document.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, what I'm asking is, how did they come up with their range of numbers? Where did those numbers come from? That's what I want to know.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, I will get back to you on that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The OEFC made the commitments to expenditures related to the Mississauga gas plant relocation. I think I've already asked the question, but I'll ask it again: You're not thinking there's anything in addition to the \$190 million related to Mississauga? We're not expected to be on the hook for any more money than what has already been announced for the Mississauga gas plant relocation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's correct. The relocation is \$180 million. The \$10 million is apart from the relocation—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, I understand that, but I had to get in the \$180 million and the \$10 million.

Could you also provide this committee with any documents, emails that you may have that are related to this decision? Your ministry would have been involved, and OEFC certainly was involved—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** With respect to relocation, that was something of the OPA. I'll pass that request on to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But the OEFC and your ministry were involved in the process. So my question is, would you please provide whatever documentation that you have that is related to this decision to this committee?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll have to get back to you on that, because some of that may be subject to confidentiality agreements with respect to the settlement; I'm not sure. You have the ability, through freedom of information, as well, to request that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We also have the ability through this committee. As you well know, there is a fairly strong precedent that was created in regard to the federal Parliament where, God, they were releasing information having to do with national defence in regard to Afghanistan at a committee. The government was not able to hide behind national security, let alone a contractual agreement with a company. So as a member of the committee, I'm asking for this information. Standing order 110(b) says that we can; precedent allows it. So please provide that information.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the best of my ability, we will.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** For the record, I just want to be clear: You have an obligation to this committee; you have an obligation to provide that information under the standing orders and, I would argue, under the precedents. I would ask you to provide all information that you have from your ministry, including those organizations such as the OEFC that you're responsible for, to the committee that is related to this decision.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I will fulfill all legal obligations that I have.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. We'll come back to that a little bit later.

How much time have I got left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Three minutes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me just use the three minutes to say a couple of things in regard to the ONTC and we'll get back to it again.

I just want to say, Minister, that we've heard the line from Mr. Bartolucci and yourself: "Oh, my God, this is terrible. It's \$500 per ride, blah, blah, blah." People are getting a bit weary of the comments that have been made by the government, because the reality is, there's not a public transportation system, when it comes to trains or a transit system, that doesn't provide for some form of subsidy from a senior level of government.

Northeastern Ontario, as you well know, needs the Ontario Northland for a number of reasons, one of which is rail freight services along the Highway 11 corridor. There are many companies, from Constance Lake, Moosonee, all the way down to North Bay, that rely on the train in order to move their goods, and there's a large amount of skepticism amongst the Ontario population that if you get rid of the rail passenger service, so shall the freight service go, and that puts our shippers at a disadvantage. As you know, the northeastern Ontario economy, like everywhere else in the province, is fairly fragile, and everything that affects the bottom line affects the ability to keep some of these places open.

**0900**

We'll get an opportunity to get into a little bit more detail on the ONTC, but I've just got to say, in my



closing comment before we go back to the next part of the rotation, it is really difficult for people to accept that you can come up with \$180 million for the cancellation and relocation of one gas plant, let alone two—because we'll get the price on the second one in the not-too-distant future—and yet the government can't come up with the \$26 million or \$28 million to subsidize, on an annual basis, the running of one of the basic parts of the infrastructure for transportation in northeastern Ontario.

With that, I just wait for the next round of questioning.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. Now, before we do this, the statement that I made initially was wrong. It has been remedied in the course of events. The clerk reminded me that it is a half-hour, half-hour, half-hour, and so we did give additional time to the Conservatives up to the full half-hour and we have given Mr. Bisson his half-hour. It would now go to the minister, who has a half-hour, and then following that we will go into rotation of 20 minutes.

Mr. Minister, you have half an hour, if you wish it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd just as soon do questions and answers.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** All right. Thank you. Then we will go into rotation and I'm advised we go back and start with the official opposition. We are now—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Wait a minute. I didn't know that. I thought it should go to the government. They had a half-hour for questions; they had a half-hour—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, it goes to the minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Okay, then I'll take my half-hour.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** All right.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, I'm delighted to be back here today. As always, it's a privilege to be part of the process, to have the opportunity to meet with my colleagues from all sides of the House as we thrash out our various opinions on the economy and on the fiscal situation in Ontario.

I'd like to go back and speak about the highlights in this year's budget, because I think it's important that we remember all the aspects of the budget, all of the aspects of what's going on, and the fact that for the first time in many years we passed a budget in a minority Legislature here in Ontario, which was, I think, a noteworthy achievement.

Let me speak first about knowledge and skills. We are continuing to fully implement full-day kindergarten by September 2014 and maintaining small class sizes, which will preserve the progress that we have made over the past eight years to ensure that Ontario continues to have world-class schools. If we listened to Don Drummond on these issues, if we listened to the official opposition, not only would we not continue the progress we've made in education—we have made considerable progress when one looks at graduation rates, when one looks at post-secondary attainment rates. The results have put Ontario now I think among the top 10 jurisdictions in the world in education. Not only would we have set back the cause of

future productivity growth, but it would have resulted, we think, in the layoff of some 20,000 teachers and other educators. We didn't think that was particularly good public policy.

Another thing that has largely gone unnoticed is that the government proceeded with its 30% off tuition grant, which was provided in the budget and has been approved by the Legislature. Now, it's interesting to contrast what hasn't happened in Ontario versus what happened in Quebec and what we have been able to do with our partners in post-secondary education, whether you're talking about our universities or our colleges. They are seeing record-setting investment, both on the capital and operating side. Our Reaching Higher plan was the largest increase in post-secondary funding really since the 1960s. Again, it was based on an economic priority—not just a social priority but an economic priority.

The Jobs and Prosperity Council we appointed received a paper from Kevin Lynch, the former clerk of the Privy Council in Ottawa, on productivity. He has said, as Roger Martin has said, that of all of the pedagogical information, the one key thing government can do is to invest in education to improve future productivity.

I had the opportunity in the run-up to the last budget to meet with David Dodge, the former governor of the Bank of Canada, former Deputy Minister of Finance in Ottawa, and somebody who's a truly great Canadian, in my view, and he spoke about the importance of productivity improvements. Sometimes we associate productivity improvements with lower wages, and that's not the case. In fact, improved productivity results from higher education; it results from investments in plant and equipment.

One of the more interesting statistics that's shown up in quarterly accounts over the last year, I think, Deputy, is the enormous increase in private sector investment in new machinery and equipment. That's a bit obscure in terms of the day-to-day issues that we all face. We're all concerned about labour markets, we're all concerned about employment, about taxes, but that, in my view, is a signal of something very important in the future, as our plants modernize.

Interestingly, manufacturing, particularly in the auto sector, has grown much more quickly than most of us thought it would at this point. I think US vehicle sales are going to hit 14 million. AutoNation in the US reported their earnings, out this morning—I think they were out before the bell this morning: up incredibly. US vehicle sales are going to hit 14 million. They went as low as nine, they peaked at 17, and nobody thought they would get back to this level by now.

Part of the challenge in the auto sector, of course, is that, again, we're producing cars with less people, and that speaks to the need for investments in education: in training, particularly, and retraining. Our Second Career program has helped transition thousands—thousands—of people from manufacturing jobs that no longer exist into new careers where there's opportunity for good-paying jobs in areas that are of interest to the individuals. They



choose things like—I've run into a couple of chefs and others. I know literally thousands—the placement rate out of Second Career, which was part of the 2008 budget, has been very high, a very successful program. So those kinds of investments, I think, are extremely important.

We have a range of employment and training services which we are more fully integrating and coordinating as part of this budget, and there will, of course, be new measures to help apprentices complete their training. We're very proud of the fact, for instance, that we've created, I think, an additional 30,000 apprenticeship positions in Ontario since we came to office. We're proud of the fact that many of those apprentices are working right here in Ontario and that we're actually starting to see a number of people who at the bottom of the recession sought employment elsewhere and are now actually coming back to Ontario, which is encouraging. There's still a long way to go.

**Jobs:** Every decision we took was about jobs, trying to preserve jobs that exist both in the private and public sector and enhance the opportunities for employment and more job creation.

On the fiscal side, of course, we do have to get back to balance. We have to do so in a responsible fashion. That's why I spoke about and cited the importance of proceeding with full-day learning and smaller class sizes, because we didn't want to be laying off 10,000 to 20,000 teachers. We simply didn't think that would have constituted good public policy, particularly at this time.

Productivity speaks to the longer term. It speaks not just to the kinds of jobs that we have, but it's very directly related to government revenue. As Mr. Drummond, Roger Martin and others have pointed out, our failure to address the productivity gap—and that, by the way, is a Canadian challenge, not just an Ontario challenge. If you look at the OECD's numbers, it's the one area where Canada is lagging, particularly relative to the United States. The way, in the long term, to get the better-paying jobs, to improve government revenues, is to improve productivity. There's a direct link. Governor Dodge kind of took me through all that and we incorporated, in this new Jobs and Prosperity Council which is headed up by Gord Nixon, the CEO of Royal Bank of Canada—I know a lot of people don't like bankers; I think they have a lot to offer. There's actually, I think, 12 or 13 people on that council representing every sector: representing unions, representing management, representing the auto sector, forestry, I believe—a whole range of things.

0910

We are spending some \$2.5 billion a year on various forms of support that are designed to assist business. When we looked at it, and looked at it in what I would call a very sharp light, we realized that all these different programs didn't necessarily have the same goals. They had different criteria, and there wasn't enough flexibility to allow government to work together with companies—for instance, Cliffs, in terms of the Ring of Fire, which is an enormous development, and we will see come online a new smelter in northern Ontario.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Used to have one.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Used to have one.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So did a lot of places—and they're just not there, and not just Ontario.

That's why we're taking the steps we are, and that's why we lowered taxes, to keep competitive, because we can't have a tax rate that's a third higher than Alberta's, Saskatchewan's, New Brunswick's and British Columbia's. It's just not very smart. That's a jobs policy for the US; that's a jobs policy for Alberta.

We decided to take the appropriate steps, bring our taxes into line with others', in order to ensure that we're competitive, and everybody agrees we're now competitive.

Our tax rates, by the way, on lowest-income Ontarians are the lowest in Canada. That was part of the package that created the harmonized sales tax, which is receiving—I think people are beginning to realize, as did groups like the centre for policy alternatives and the Toronto Anti-Poverty Coalition, the importance of that tax package, not just for business but for Ontarians of more modest means. As I go about the land, people come up to me, particularly small businesses, and say, "I didn't realize how much hidden tax I was paying until I started getting my input tax credits." They're saying that they're going to reinvest that.

I have a good friend who I golf with. He's a very successful guy. He's quite a bit older than I am. His family employs about 800 Ontarians. We were walking down the fairway one day and he said, "Dwight, I've got some good news, and I've got some bad news." This was way back in 2010.

I said, "Okay, Rich, give me the good news first."

He said, "Dwight, I'm going to vote for you. It's going to be the first time in my life I've ever voted Liberal."

I said, "That's great, Rich. Why is that?"

He said, "Well, the HST is the right thing to do."

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They tell us all the same thing.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Wait till you hear the end of the story; you'll appreciate the end more than you appreciate the beginning.

He said, "The HST was the right thing to do. I'm going to be able to take my tax savings and hire more people."

I said, "Okay, Rich, what's the bad news?"

He said, "I've never voted for a winner."

I'm hearing that from more and more people. Our tax credits and the Trillium benefit—the Chair of the committee, I think, has introduced a very useful piece of private member's legislation that I'm looking forward to working with him on, in terms of the consequence of the change we made, which, frankly, we didn't anticipate. I said that in the House, and I'll say it again. I think the Chair of the committee has come up with a very interesting way of trying to resolve the issue, and I've asked him to meet with my officials so that we can explore further how we can bring about the change that he proposes.

The Trillium benefit is being hailed by many groups, anti-poverty groups and others, as a very useful way to flow people money throughout the year. It builds on things like the Ontario child benefit, which is a tax cut for people of very modest incomes and, I think, important to the future of Ontario, particularly for young families who are struggling in an economy, I think we all agree, that is still struggling—a great deal of uncertainty.

In terms of getting back to balance, the key is, how do you deal with, particularly, health care? Anybody that suggests they will cut the health care budget is suggesting that they will eliminate accessibility to good-quality health care.

I think what's important, and what the Minister of Health is doing in helping us achieve the 2.1% growth that we need to achieve—and understand the enormity of that undertaking. We have cut the rate of growth in health care over the last couple of years, as employment of nurses has gone up, as has access to services, as has the average cost of health care. It's a question of managing, more value for money.

The minister is particularly keen on the reorientation to more home care, and the home care budget is actually going up 4.4%, if I'm not mistaken, which signals where the priorities are, and that is delivering more services closer to home, building on our aging at home strategy. It involves a whole range of new approaches to health care and exciting approaches. It does involve some difficult choices; it does involve moving money from one source to the other.

We are particularly proud of the LHINs and particularly proud of the local input that goes into health care decision-making. Have there been challenges? Absolutely. Can we do things better? All the time. But I believe and our government believes that the closer to home decisions are made, the better those decisions will be.

One of the more interesting aspects of the budget that didn't get as much controversy as I thought it would was imposing the fee on the Ontario drug benefit, the copay. That was a big step in terms of helping to manage drug costs going into the future, and our government has taken a number of steps there. Our moves on generic drugs, which reduce costs to government and therefore to taxpayers by some half a billion dollars per year: Those are the kinds of changes that will allow us to transform health care.

"Transformation" is a key word. Don Drummond himself said the worst approach you can take is just across-the-board cuts. You've got to transform. It takes a little longer, it's a little harder, but in the long term it serves everyone's interests. Our view, the view of the government, is that this kind of transformation, whether you're talking about drugs, whether you're talking about physician services, whether you're talking about acute care, whether you're talking about long-term care—regardless of what you're talking about, it's that kind of transformation that's going to make Ontario a better place in the future. It's going to allow us to be competitive, allow us to grow an economy that has the

kinds of services that will build productivity enhancements that will build a better future for all of our kids.

In spite of the global situation—let me address for a few minutes, because everybody's talking about it, what's going on in the world, what's going on in Europe and what's going on in the US. Everybody's nervous about it and there has been a marked change in outlook since the first calendar quarter of this year.

I have the good fortune of dealing with my finance minister colleagues across the country from all political parties. I've had the opportunity to deal with the governor of the Bank of Canada through fairly regular discussions, as well as others. As you know, a couple of days ago, the Bank of Canada reduced its projections for growth in the balance of this year and next year. The good news is, the growth numbers we have projected in the budget for this year and for the next two years are well within where the consensus is right now. But we keep an eye on these things—we have to—and that's why quarterly reports are so important. When we look at economic accounts, for instance, and see—the last economic accounts we put out were actually fairly positive. They go back to the first calendar quarter of this year; looking forward to see what is in the second quarter economic accounts, because that will give us an indication as to how the rest of the world is impacting on Ontario more directly and it obviously would be more timely.

We can't avoid it. A lot of people—I shouldn't say a lot of people. A few people who really don't understand things try to suggest all the problems here in Ontario were caused by this government. In fact, when one looks at the United States, when one looks at Europe, when one looks even at China—even though I think their growth rate this year is now projected at 7.8% or 7.9%, that's down considerably from where people thought it would be.

I can tell you, our sister provinces are going to start running into more challenges, particularly those that are energy based. The price of oil is down considerably; potash demand is moderating. This is going to pose real challenges for our sister provinces, which poses a challenge for Ontario, because when Alberta is successful, when Saskatchewan is successful, we're successful. A lot of—

*Interjection.*

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Absolutely, and that's why we're so excited about Cliffs, that's why we're so excited about the record new mining investment in northern Ontario this year. But I do worry about commodity prices, Gilles, and I do worry about demand in China, because that will very much impact on a sector that has been, in my view, one of the better-performing sectors in our economy over the last few quarters.

Yesterday, I saw Minister Bartolucci put out a release indicating that there has been record investment in new mining opportunity in Ontario—I think some \$4.1 billion, if I'm not mistaken.



The Ring of Fire remains an enormous opportunity for all Ontarians, particularly northerners—for all Canadians, for that matter. It will become a major, major piece in the Canadian context, and from a mining perspective, and from a global context. Those kinds of things are important.

Unemployment has come down. Employment has gone up. The unemployment rate is still higher than we would like. It's below the US. We are now tacking towards the Canadian average, which we expected. Because of the hit that manufacturing took, particularly in the southwestern Ontario corridor—and I'm particularly proud of the southwestern Ontario economic development fund, which is going to help communities like Chatham; communities like Wallaceburg; communities like Sarnia; communities like my hometown of Windsor, which but for one quarter had Canada's highest unemployment rate throughout most of the last three years of the downturn. That is going to be an important stimulus and an ongoing way to help incent new business activity.

There has been a lot of talk—and I have to applaud the third party; they quite correctly pointed out that corporate balance sheets are full of cash right now and corporations need to step up to the plate. We did lower taxes for them; we've cut the general rate from 15% to 11%. They need to step up to the plate. I think that when you speak to more sophisticated business, they agree. But there is that uncertainty in the world, and part of the Jobs and Prosperity Council's work is to look at how we get them to start spending more, investing some of the cash that's on their balance sheets right here in Ontario and in those sectors, particularly, where there's an opportunity for real employment growth.

I'm thinking of financial services. Toronto has gone from 12th to 10th now in the world financial centres. We have now gone from third to second in North America. We created the Toronto Financial Services Alliance. I think it's now the largest employer in the GTA, not to mention London, Ottawa, across the province—generally speaking, good-paying jobs and high-value-added jobs.

I had the opportunity a couple of years ago to open an in-house software service for a major international investment bank here—they chose Toronto; they could have gone anywhere in the world—and I went in to cut the ribbon. Mayor Miller was the mayor at the time, and he was there. When we got there, we kind of laughed, because we walked into the room to two observations: (1) We raised the average age in the room, because the 160 employees looked to be, on average, in their mid-20s; and (2) we could have walked into the United Nations. People of every colour, race, background were in that room, and they came from all of our great universities. When we talked to the principals of the company, what they said was, "The kids you're turning out at your universities"—whether Guelph, Waterloo, U of T, York, University of Windsor, Laurentian—"are highly skilled, highly trained." The really great thing about the GTA, particularly, and many Ontario cities is the diversity, these people who can speak languages. The young people

who will be developing this in-house software—and they're still there in spite of some of the challenges that the company that set this up has had—can speak a range of languages and communicate either online or over the phone and develop these in a multiplicity of languages.

That speaks to the future, and that relates back to what I said at the beginning about education, and why that is so important and why tax credits to encourage foreign people to come to Ontario and to invest in Ontario are so important. Our future growth is going to be tied to our ability to bring new people to Ontario.

I know that my colleague Deb Matthews did her doctoral dissertation on the importance of robust immigration to a growing economy. Our birth rates are declining in Canada, and without robust immigration we will see a real decline in our standard of living. That's why we think you need to have an open policy and welcome more people to this great province.

We've seen wave after wave of this in our provincial and our national history. My grandparents came here because Henry Ford was paying \$5 a day; they came from Ireland. Then, wave after wave of immigration, whether from eastern Europe, southern Europe—now we're seeing more from Asia, from the Middle East. It's really quite remarkable. The GTA is particularly diverse.

I know my community—I think Deb, in her dissertation, said that we are the fourth most diverse urban area in Canada. Having grown to—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Toronto, no?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No; Windsor. Toronto is first. Having grown up there, there were no mosques when I was a kid. I now have five mosques.

I have one school, Begley school, a great school—one of the schools we rebuilt, by the way, because we believe in rebuilding schools and serving and investing not only in the infrastructure but providing these new kinds—at Begley school, there are 54 languages spoken. In fact, the flagpole base is sustained by a rock from the country of origin of every country represented in that school.

That is fundamental to our future prospects and our future growth. If we welcome new Canadians, if we welcome investment from offshore, we will do well.

I also think we should respect our strengths. I'm very pleased that the Maple Group bid to retain Canadian ownership of our stock exchange looks like it has cleared virtually every regulatory hurdle and is going to come to pass. I think that is remarkable. It troubled me greatly—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Pardon me?

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, no. You'll recall that I was quite handily criticized by a number of people for asking questions.

I was pleased to work with the Maple Group and others to bring about the bid that will ensure that the city, the province, that is the home of Canada's financial services—it's not a matter of them coming and taking us over; it's a matter of us continuing to lead the world, as we have, in financial services.

There's a Canadian predilection to bash banks—anybody who has been turned down for a loan. But there's also good reason to be supportive of them. Your pension savings, your RRSPs, your defined contribution plan have bank stocks in them. The Canada pension plan has bank stocks in it; Teachers' has bank stocks in it. Their success is the success of working people. They employ more than 400,000 people here in the GTA in good-paying jobs, not to mention, as I said earlier, London and other urban centres. Financial services are important, and I think that leading in that sphere is important as well.

The Canadian brand is alive and well in the world. In spite of the economic challenges we have, Ontario is still seen as a safe haven in world bond markets, and we continue to sell our bonds at a record pace and at record low interest rates.

It does worry me—and I think the one thing the Legislature and the people of Ontario need to be concerned about is interest costs. Every 100 basis points, every 1% increase in interest rates, in yield, will cost the treasury half a billion dollars. That is significant.

Last year, Spain and Italy saw their yields go up 3% and 4% in the span of a couple of weeks. That's a vulnerability.

I said in a speech to, I think it was, the Canadian Club that, for a generation now, since 1990—21 years; this was in 2011—Ontario has only reduced its net debt in one year, and that was due to an accounting change. It has doubled over the life of all governments. It hasn't quite yet with us. It will by the end of this mandate. And that is simply no longer sustainable. Our view is that our focus needs to be on education and health care, getting back to those core principles, what is important.

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That gives rise to difficult choices. Regardless of who's sitting in this chair a year from now, they are going to be faced with those difficult choices, and I believe that we're making the right ones. We engaged Mr. Drummond and he did, I thought, an outstanding report. I'm pleased that we have acted on all but a handful of his recommendations. The ones we've rejected we've given a very clear reason for.

We talked about transparency and accountability earlier today, and one of the things that I'm particularly satisfied with is the addendum which we provided in the most recent budget. This is new, this is an innovation, where it outlines on a line-by-line basis where program savings are coming from. In the old days, you had to go through estimates and you had to rely on—and we actually got this idea from the Obama administration, who provide a similar thing in their budget. I had the opportunity to meet with the director of the Office of Management and Budget. We had a look at this, and this gives people an easy way, a quick way, to see what the government is doing. You don't have to wait for estimates anymore. We spell it out not just for this year but for the next two years. This will become a regular feature. Accountability and transparency is important.

Is my time up?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that the half-hour is up.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Okay, great. Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We now go into 20-minute rotations, starting with the Conservatives.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We're going to move back to the relocation of the Mississauga power plant. There's clearly about 190 million reasons why we should, so we've got some further questioning on that.

Mr. Bisson actually spoke about lawsuits, so I want to ask you, with regard to due diligence and mitigating risk in terms of your ministry's involvement on that, if you can tell us how the ministry—does the ministry do due diligence when entering into significant contracts with vendors such as Greenfield? What due diligence was done, in fact?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Deputy, would you like to?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** In terms of relationships to the gas plant, that was the Ministry of Energy's decision, working with the OPA. The Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., under its charter and requirements, has certain functions. One of the things that the OEFC is responsible for is administration of the NUG contracts, the non-utility-generation power purchase agreements that Ontario Hydro entered into. These contracts, when they were transferred to the OEFC—those contracts are being managed by the Ministry of Finance until they expire, and some of them have different end dates. That is a clear role for the Ministry of Finance in terms of providing oversight of those contracts.

A key contract that was part of the discussions was related to Keele Valley, and certainly the ministry had oversight over the management of that contract and had assumed the responsibilities as being party to the court challenge that was originally launched against Ontario Hydro. The Ministry of Finance, through the OEFC, had a responsibility as a party to the court challenge that had started in 1998 and had come to a conclusion through a settlement. That was clearly the role of the Ministry of Finance with respect to that contract related to that company.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm just wondering, then, if there were two outstanding or pending or previous lawsuits with Greenfield, why would the government or the ministry not advise OPA of the previous dealings with Greenfield and not enter into such a third agreement?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The OPA, I think, in their materials they've shared, actually made reference to that settlement. So I think they acknowledge the existence of that settlement. They are aware of that settlement. In fact, in materials they've shared publicly, they've actually referenced that settlement.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** A question for the minister: Were you aware that Greenfield actually missed a payment to EIG? I believe it was a November payment to EIG. Were you aware of that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No.



**Mr. Michael Harris:** In fact, it was a \$1.2-million payment that they missed. Were you aware that the OPA covered that payment to EIG?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I believe that fell under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So was this \$1.2-million payment to EIG accounted for in the \$180 million that was tabled last week by you or the Minister of Energy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have to get back to you on that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right; get back to us on that. I believe I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Rick Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Mr. Harris. Minister, as early as November 20, 2011, the OPA estimated that the cost for the cancellation of the Mississauga gas plant would be between \$150 million and \$200 million. When were you made aware of this estimate?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Probably around that time. I don't recall.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. It's a shame that there's a bit of a divide in the Liberal government, that the Minister of Energy wouldn't really tell you precisely that the government would be happy to spend this amount of money.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, he did. I'm sure that was part of discussions. You asked when I became aware of it. It would have been around that time.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** One of the things that we've discovered, Minister, is that the Minister of Energy couldn't say with certainty how the \$190 million would be paid for, but he did table documents that showed that, as late as November 20, the OPA's CEO, Colin Andersen, and his staff were also under the impression that the cost of the cancellation would be through the rate base; in other words, higher hydro bills. So my question, sir, is: Why did OPA's CEO, Colin Andersen, whom Minister Bentley was negotiating this deal with on behalf of the government, say that this would be paid for by higher hydro bills when you told the media that you were budgeting for this through the tax base? Which is it, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's a government decision, and the decision had not been made at that point. There were options. I haven't got the document you've got in front of you, but that's the point. The government makes that decision. We felt, in the circumstances, that it was appropriate that the cost fall to the tax base as opposed to the rate base. I'll remind you that Eastern—the plant that we're talking about, they won that through an RFP, as I recall, years ago. This is an energy ministry question. I'm trying to be helpful, but at that point the decision had not been taken. Once the government took the decision to attempt to settle and to relocate, there were a whole range of decisions that fell from that. Among them is: Where would the cost of the settlement be borne?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Who would be making the decision to change from ratepayers to taxpayers?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It would be the cabinet.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The cabinet themselves. I see. And how was this decision made, sir, from ratepayer to taxpayer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We meet every Wednesday, and ministries bring forward what are called minutes. Those are recommendations with a specific decision. Those decisions are then taken by cabinet. Cabinet acts in a consensual manner, with the minister responsible taking the lead. We discuss the matter and we settle on it.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. In their decision, what were the criteria, then, for them to switch from ratepayers to taxpayers? Obviously, they had their—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, we didn't switch. The government decision hadn't been made at the time that that memo—and I haven't seen the whole memo; I'd want to see the whole thing before I could comment on it.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** But one had mentioned "ratepayer" earlier and another one had mentioned "taxpayer."

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But that's not the government; that's the OPA. So that may be an option that was looked at; I don't know. I haven't got the document. If you want to share it with me, I'll have a look at the whole thing. But it's one document out of, I'm sure, hundreds that went into the government's decision, which was taken subsequent to the election, in order to do what your leader, your party, asked us to do, as well as the people in Mississauga and Etobicoke, as well as our own caucus, and that is to relocate the plant.

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**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, in an email exchange, the OPA also said that the cost to taxpayers would be split into different years.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The OPA is not the government. The government makes that decision.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We often get advice from all kinds of people as part of the decision-making process. I don't know what that's part of. I can't even really answer. I would probably refer these questions and that memo to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So would that \$190 million be in this year's budget or will it be in next year's budget?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It is in this year's budget. It will crystallize this year, from an auditing perspective. It is in the budget now in the form of contingency. It will not affect the bottom line. The auditor, because it will be material—that is a material amount of money, obviously—will look at it.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So just to be clear, then, this amount of money, this \$180 million or \$190 million, as you mentioned earlier this week, will be borne on the back of the taxpayer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This will be borne on the tax base, yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. I see. A question for you, Minister: What year was the Mississauga power plant first decided, where they started building? What year?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's energy; I'll refer that to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm sorry. Say again?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll have to refer that to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You're not sure what year?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm not sure—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Because there would have been finances involved in that, so I would think—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** There would have been finances involved in that, so I would think that you would be aware.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes; I just don't have the information here. The Minister of Energy can answer that question. It was in the middle part of the last decade. I don't recall specifically, and I don't want to give you wrong information.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. I would imagine, sir, that there would be many studies conducted prior to the decision to build the Mississauga power plant: engineering studies, environmental studies—you name the studies; I'm sure that they were all in there. That would all be incurring costs along the way. Who did you consult with, with regard to—because, again, if there's finance involved, sir, I have to believe that you would be part of that team and part of that decision-making. So, again, who was consulted with regard to the locating—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll refer that to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. So you have no idea who they consulted with?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't have accurate information with me—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You can give us some inaccurate, if you like.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's a Ministry of Energy file, and I'm reluctant to speculate lest I give you wrong information. I certainly wouldn't want to do that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I can appreciate that, sir.

Going into the costs—and perhaps you can help us out here—once the decision was made, studies completed, they started digging the hole, as I would call it. There would be labour costs; there would be material costs and so on. I'm sure that, with your contracts, there were also penalty clauses in there as well.

What was the initial estimated cost of the Mississauga power plant, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll have to refer that to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** But, sir, it's finances—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, it's not.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You should know.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. With respect, power plants are not part of the tax base; they're part of the rate base, and it gets reflected into energy costs. So I'll refer that to the Minister of Energy, and I'm sure he will be able to provide you better information than I can.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. All right. So you will pass on the opportunity to expand further as to what the initial estimated costs—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I want to make sure that you get the accurate information from the minister responsible.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. So would you have any idea, sir, since cheques come from your department, how much money had been initially put into the plant prior to cancellation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The way the electricity system works, no money came from the treasury for that. That's through the rate base. That's why we distinguish between the rate base and the tax base. Now, the taxpayer is largely the ratepayer; I understand that. The way these power purchase agreements are entered into is done through the Ontario Power Authority, and there's no tax dollars that commingle with that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. So—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The cost of the power purchase agreement is borne through electricity prices.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Of which the government would then enter into contractual agreements so that—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The power authority enters into contractual agreements, not the government.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. And the power authority—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Ontario Power Authority enters into those contractual agreements.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. I'll turn it back over to my colleague Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Rick. Minister, during the negotiations with Greenfield South, as Minister of Finance and chair of the treasury board, were you ever asked to provide advice from a fiscal standpoint in terms of how much the province could afford?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I wasn't personally, no. I don't know; were our officials involved in that at all?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** That's something we could follow up on.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We'll follow up, to see what precise involvement there was.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I would appreciate that. There would have likely been an analysis within your ministry officials undertaking this cancellation—and the impact the decision would have on the province and our finances.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me try to give you a bit of flavour as to how these things occur. First of all, the lawyers that work in our various ministries report to the Attorney General. The Ministry of Finance's lawyers are actually employed by the Attorney General, and they work within our ministry.

Energy would have had the lead on these negotiations. I'm not sure at what point they actually began to enter into formal negotiations when it became evident that a settlement could be reached in terms of relocating the plant, so I'll refer it again to the Ministry of Energy. Finance—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** They would have had to have negotiated with finance—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, they wouldn't.



**Mr. Michael Harris:** —in terms of coming up with the \$190 million, in terms of where it was going to come from.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Finance would become involved at the point in time when they thought they had reached a settlement and they had crystallized a number.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You talked about the ranges, though. Would there not be consultation between those parties and finance in terms of the ranges and where that line item was going to go within the budget or not? There had to have been discussions. Would there not have been?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, that is simply for budget purposes. Let's say, for instance, that the settlement cost way more than we had provided for in contingency. Then there would have been—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** They came to you before they started negotiating, though, to ask where this money was going to come from, and you said it would come from contingency.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, no. The negotiations started—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So they negotiated with Greenfield, not knowing where the money was coming from in the first place.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They negotiated with Greenfield, knowing that they had the government's direction to negotiate. They couldn't have known what the ultimate outcome was. Finance—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Were your officials from the Ministry of Finance, though, involved in that discussion or negotiations?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, not directly. We would have simply looked, in our budget, for budget purposes, in the coming year, at what potential liabilities are out there. Again, that's why we have contingency and reserve: to deal with things that are, at the time the budget is set, unpredictable.

Again, take forest firefighting, which is a regular thing. Some years, your costs go way above what you budget; some years, they come in way under. You try, through contingency and reserve, to provide a cushion to manage these unanticipated expenditures.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm glad you brought unanticipated costs up, because—I guess I'll draw your attention to the fact that contingency funds and reserves are used for unexpected costs. Would you agree with that statement?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes. Not just unexpected costs, but costs that we are reasonably certain are going to happen but we don't know what the amount is.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We knew that you knew, fairly early on, the amount it would cost Ontarians. Who decided not to include the amount in the 2011 fall economic update, which you presented, in fact, three days later, on November 23?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, you're wrong. We didn't know what the amount was going to be. But let's say we did. Let's say we had settled on an amount we

were willing to pay. You're telling me that when you're in litigation, you should tell the world what you're going to pay the guy? Is that protecting the taxpayers' interest?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's why comments about Oakville at \$1 billion are, frankly, reckless.

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**Mr. Michael Harris:** What will Oakville cost taxpayers? If taxpayers are on the hook for \$190 million to move Mississauga, what can taxpayers expect Oakville to cost to relocate? I believe Mississauga was one third the size.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You know what? At this point, I think if you're suggesting that last fall I should have put a line in the budget saying, "Here's how much we'll pay," that, sir, in my view, would be a huge disservice to taxpayers. So no, I wouldn't have.

Not only that, but we didn't have a sense; we really didn't know. We defined a range that we thought it would likely fall within so that whatever the eventual—and there was no guarantee, by the way, that we'd reach a settlement at that time. There wasn't. I don't recall when talks actually began, but there was no guarantee that there would be a settlement.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** A \$190-million expenditure is a fairly significant one.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's very significant.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Are you aware that that's the entire operating budgets of both labour and francophone affairs combined?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Significant. So a lot of folks in my riding seem to think that it was obviously a seat-saver program. Would you agree with that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Given the fact that your leader openly supported the decision, and we're delighted to have that support, the people of Mississauga and Etobicoke were unequivocal, and the government, the opposition and the third party all responded, all made the same undertaking, here we are.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that, we will go to the NDP. Mr. Bisson.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Carrying on to where we were a little bit earlier, just some follow-up questions.

The first one is, when was the Premier made aware of what the cost would be for the cancellation of these projects?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll have to refer that to energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're the Minister of Finance, so you have to account for the money.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I do have to account for the money; I agree. You asked me when the Premier was made aware. I don't know. I want to give you accurate information.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, that's really appreciated, but prior to the last round of questioning you said—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I became—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me ask the question. I'm not being combative. In the last round of questioning, you said that this issue was discussed at cabinet. When was that discussed at cabinet: after or before the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** After the election.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So there was no discussion, prior to the election, at cabinet regarding the cancellation of those gas plants?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not to my recollection. There was talk about the gas plants. There was obviously a lot of conversation in cabinet around the provision of electricity, and that was part of it in terms of particularly meeting the energy demands of the western GTA.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Were there discussions at cabinet prior to the election around the difficulty that the construction of these plants presented to your local members?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was discussion among us, but I don't remember a formal cabinet discussion about it, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So there were discussions amongst individuals of cabinet in regard to the difficulty—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our local members raised the issues with us, what they were hearing from their constituents—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I would imagine. That's where I was going. So your local members, as I would, were raising this issue with you and others within cabinet. Was it raised at caucus prior to the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And if it was raised at caucus, then I would take it there had to have been some kind of conversation at cabinet prior to the election on this issue.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not on relocation. As I said, we've talked—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But the general issue of the politics of it: Was it discussed at cabinet?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So the Premier and the ministers at cabinet were aware that this was a political problem?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They were aware that it was an issue.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** An issue. All right. Issue, political problem; I won't get into the semantics.

So was there a conversation prior to the election that, "Listen, if we make a decision to cancel this, it's going to cost some money"?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not a formal cabinet discussion that I'm aware of.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Was there informal discussion amongst yourself and others in regard to "If we decide"—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not that I was part of.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But let me see if I understand this. Your local members are lobbying members of cabinet, they're raising it at caucus—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —there's a discussion at cabinet in regard to the politics of all this, or, as you said, the issue, or whatever way you had put it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The issue of energy in general and then the western GTA: How do we ensure adequate supply at the same time as ensuring that we can build a plant in a location that's suitable to the people of Mississauga, Etobicoke—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** There must have been a realization that there's a cost associated with cancelling prior to the election.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** For me, the decisions came post-election. That's when I was first part of what I would call a—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you were taken by surprise during the election. You had no idea that this was going to get cancelled.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I wouldn't say "taken by surprise," but there was no cabinet discussion prior to the election, formal or informal, about relocation.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So this was strictly a political decision.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This was a campaign undertaking—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** This was a political decision.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —at a time when I think we were still behind in the polls, so it required a government decision, which occurred after the election.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let's be clear here. We have lobbying going on prior to the election about this being a political problem for certain members in the area. There are discussions at caucus; there's a discussion among cabinet members; everybody—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think there was quite a bit of public discussion about it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Obviously there was public—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —in the media: television and newspapers. I read newspapers; I watch television—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, let me ask the question. I'm trying—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But I'm trying to answer your previous question, which you didn't give me a chance to. Was there a formal cabinet minute or discussion? No.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** This is where I'm going: What you're saying is, this decision was made strictly during the period of the election; this decision had not been made prior to the election; the decision was made—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was no decision made during the election. There was a campaign commitment made.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So this was a political decision.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was a campaign commitment made.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right. We can call it what we want.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The government that was elected in October made the decision—



**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let's agree that there was a decision by the campaign to reverse the position of the Liberal Party on this particular issue.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was a campaign undertaking that, if elected, a Liberal government would relocate the plant, a decision that was supported by the leader of your party and the leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We never talked about ripping up the agreement. We always talked about—we were opposed to it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Relocating the plant without ripping up the agreement?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, I was campaign co-chair. I know what was going on, so let's not get into that one.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You said we did the right thing. My recollection is—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** This is my chance to ask you questions.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —you said we did the right thing.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no. The record is quite clear.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Are you saying, then, you'd put a gas plant in Mississauga?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We would have never put a gas plant there in the first place.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Wait a minute; you just said you wouldn't rip up the agreement.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** This is time that I have to ask you questions, Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm just trying to get to the point here.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My first question was—and you've answered that there was no decision prior to the election by the cabinet of Ontario or the Liberal caucus of Ontario to cancel this gas plant.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Absolutely not.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The decision was made by the campaign during the election.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, the campaign team did not have the ability to make the decision. Only the government of Ontario could do that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The decision to—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What the campaign did was, the campaign made a campaign commitment. The Legislature had been dissolved. There was no—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I am listening. You're trying to put words in my mouth, and I'm not going to let you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm not putting words in your mouth.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was a campaign undertaking.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The Liberal Party—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We had no ability to deliver unless we were re-elected.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Of course you can't deliver until the government gets elected. We all understand that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's right. Thank you for acknowledging that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My point is, the decision to reverse the Liberal Party's position on this was made by the campaign and so therefore this was a political decision.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was a campaign commitment during the election.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That was my only point. On to the next question.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You make political decisions; campaign teams make undertakings—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's right. You made a political decision; we understand that. We hear what you said.

The Premier, then, in this whole process, I take it—like every political party, the leader of the Liberal Party happens to be the Premier of Ontario. He was part of the decision-making process during the election, was he not?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm sorry; give me that again, Gilles. He would have, yes. And as he said yesterday, it was his decision.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's right. Just for the record—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And I said that Monday.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes. So the Premier said, "Yes, okay, go ahead. As a party, if elected, we're going to reverse this."

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We did that, yes. He's the leader of the party.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, very good. That brings us back to a political decision. This was a seat-saver.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This was respecting the views of the people of Mississauga and Etobicoke. I think that's part of what—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You can call it a chocolate bar or a candy bar; I understand. But it's still a chocolate bar.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think that's the role of elected officials.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, you can call a chocolate bar a candy bar; it's still a chocolate bar. Okay?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So it was a political decision.

Were there any discussions around the costs of settling this dispute among the cabinet during the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So during the election, at no time did the Liberal Party canvass the ministers responsible, such as the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Finance or others, about, "Hey, guys, how much is this going to cost?"

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was not canvassed as Minister of Finance. I'll refer that question to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right, but the Premier made the decision, and I would have to believe that the Premier making the decision would have to have somewhat of an idea of how much this is going to cost, because it's going to affect your campaign commitments.

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I mentioned earlier that I would get to you what those estimates were. I think I

made that undertaking either in your first round or in the Conservatives' first round.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you were not canvassed during the period of the election by the Liberal Party or your cabinet colleagues as to the cost of this cancellation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was not. And I—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The OEFC—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If I may complete my answer, I'll remind you that at that time there wasn't even an indication, first of all, that there would ever be a settlement, and, number two, whether it would be out of the rate base or the tax base. So I will refer that question as well to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. But in the email on November—part of the emails that we received from energy that were released, not all the information we wanted, but some of it, there's clearly a discussion going on between the OPA and the OEFC with regard to how much this is going to cost and who's going to pay for it.

So my question to you was, the Liberal Party, in making the decision, and ultimately the leader of the Liberal Party, being Dalton McGuinty, made this decision without knowing how much it was going to cost either the ratepayer or the taxpayer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I undertook to get you a response later with respect to what the estimates were. In our campaign document, we laid out a range of—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But, Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If I may finish—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But, Minister, my question is—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You know, let me finish answering you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, very good.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Thank you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're so welcome.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I undertook, I think about an hour ago, to get you the information on the campaign stuff.

With respect to the emails from energy, I think we responded to that when we indicated that the OEFC was in fact involved in the non-utility generating contracts but was not involved in the relocation. At the time of the campaign, no discussions had occurred between the company involved and the government. In our campaign document, there was again prudence built into our numbers that would allow us to accommodate—and again, I was not—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Canvassed.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —canvassed with respect to the potential cost. I can't answer for energy or anyone else, but I have undertaken to get you that information.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But being the guy who signs the cheques—you're the Minister of Finance—I find it passing strange that the Ministry of Energy or the Premier or somebody associated with the decision of the Liberal Party wouldn't have said, "By the way, this is going to have a hit on your budget of X amount of dollars. What's your thought?" You never had those kinds of conversations?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** At that time it was not necessarily going to be on the tax base.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It could have been on the ratepayer.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It could have been, in which case I—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Or in plain English, people who pay hydro bills.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So here we are, the Liberal Party making a decision, with the head of the party being Dalton McGuinty. At this point you're saying he didn't have any conversations with you, so it leads me to believe that either he had a conversation with the Minister of Energy and provided the number, or they didn't have that conversation, at which point not only was this a political decision to save a couple of seats; it was a pretty irresponsible one, because they didn't know what the hell the cost was.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The party would, as other parties—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I thought you guys had costed your platform.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We had, and we—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It sounds like you're off by at least \$180 million.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, because, unlike you, we actually provide contingency.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We did provide contingency in ours as well, just so you know.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Good. All right. Bully for you, because you had undertaken to do the same thing and you didn't include it in your costs.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But you follow my point. I think if you were sitting in this chair you'd be asking me the very same question.

It appears from the outside that this was a political decision in order to save a couple of seats, and either the party knew and Mr. McGuinty knew what the cost was because they had conversations with somebody within government, at which point that raises a whole bunch of other questions, or, quite frankly, they didn't know and made this decision on the fly, which I think makes it pretty incompetent as far as the decision. That's my editorial view. You don't have to respond to that.

Let me get to the other point I asked earlier. You were saying earlier that there are no other costs, you figure, that are going to be associated with adding up the bill beyond the \$180 million for the Mississauga gas plant relocation.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's correct.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The cancellation—let's be clear about this. The cancellation—penalties, potential settlement of lawsuits: no other costs beyond the \$180 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** For the relocation, the cancellation, yes.



**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So that deals with potential lawsuits, relocation costs. This is the total all-in bill, \$180 million, give or take a bit on contingency—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** For the relocation, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —and the settlement of the matter with the company: any contracts, cancellation fees, all that kind of stuff.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That would be energy to ask. As far as I am aware, the \$180 million covers all of that. We'll refer that to energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right, but understand my skepticism at this point. You're the Minister of Finance. You have to balance the budget. It comes out of your pocket now because you decided it's not going to be those who pay hydro bills who are going to pay for this; it's going to be the taxpayer. I'm asking you, as the Minister of Finance: Is there any other money that you possibly could expend beyond the \$180 million to deal with the cancellation of the contracts? Yes or no? Will there be more money?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not for the relocation of the Mississauga plant.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I understand the relocation, but there's the issue of the contracts. Those contracts were basically made null and void by the relocation. There's probably some form of penalties within those contracts.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Relocation costs cover, as I understand it, all of the penalties.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're saying it covers it all. So the answer to the question is, you don't expect anything beyond the \$180 million on the Mississauga issue.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** With respect to the Mississauga relocation and the contracts associated with it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I understand what you're saying, that you don't want to get into actual figures. I understand what you said there earlier for the reasons you did, but you have a \$500-million contingency fund, of which you've already spent \$180 million, and you spent how much extra for forest fires?

**Mr. Greg Orensak:** Seventy-two.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Another \$72 million, and maybe more. Who knows? That's \$310 million less \$72 million. Does that lead us to believe that the settlement will be something less than \$230 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, because money will go into the contingency fund when there's an under-spend on other things. There will be other draws on the contingency fund. Again, Gilles, it's designed to be a buffer, and it works both ways. Sometimes you take some out; sometimes you put some in.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So the settlement on Oakville could be contained within the contingency fund, which has about \$240 million left, or it could be more?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm reluctant to comment on the Oakville situation because, as I understand it, it is subject to negotiation.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no. I understand. I'm not asking for a figure. All I'm asking you is—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Oakville—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me ask the question. You take into account the \$180 million for the Mississauga deal, the \$10 million on Keele, the \$70-some-odd million on forest fires, and it leaves you with \$240 million. My question is: Can you contain the settlement of the Oakville relocation, whatever that might be, in the contingency fund of \$240 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know right now, because I don't know what the settlement—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So it could be more?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It could be. It could be less. And it may not crystallize this year.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So it might be more; it might be less.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And it might not crystallize this year.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So there is a possibility this might throw off your fiscal plan.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. You're forgetting about reserves, and you're forgetting about, again—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me finish, just so that we don't—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, I'm going to listen to you. You listened to me. I'll listen to you.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, you're not listening to me because you just asked the same question which I answered two questions ago.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I do want to listen to you. You know I like to listen to you.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Sometimes you bring the contingency down; sometimes it goes up, in-year. It also would hinge on what the amount is. There's also a reserve built into the budget. Finally, we don't know what it is, and then, finally, it may or may not crystallize this year.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I hear you, but the point is that it could or could not be above the \$240 million as far as the settlement. My point is this: When we were having this whole discussion around the budget motion and eventually around the budget bill, you kept on saying, "Every penny counts." What kind of signal are you sending here when you say, "Every penny counts, but what the heck, saving a couple of seats in Mississauga, that's \$180 million, plus some more, maybe \$500 million, maybe \$300 million"? What signal are you sending to people out there that you're serious about balancing a budget and that every penny counts?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I will be reporting public accounts and Q1 results fairly soon. We do quarterly reports as well as public accounts, which the auditor goes through, and we'll see where all these numbers land.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Wow. I don't know. This is something else.

Moving on, some more questions in the same area: We talked earlier about how the OEEFC, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., was part of the myriad of people who were involved in a decision about how to come up with the money for this, right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not with respect to the relocation.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, the money.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They were not.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So what was the OEFC's relationship to the decision around the \$180 million, just so I'm clear?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Deputy?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. had an important role with respect to the settlement of the legal dispute between the company, with the former Ontario Hydro—that the OEFC took over that NUG contract. So the OEFC's role was working with the company to come up with the settlement. That was occurring at the same time that they were also having discussions with the Ministry of Energy on the relocation.

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**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, so OEFC, essentially, was the one who negotiated with Eastern Power. Is that what you're saying?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** On the NUGs.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Yes, just on the legal settlement. So if we go back—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Just on the Keele Valley?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Keele Valley.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Was the OEFC involved in the discussion around the settlement on the Mississauga?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** That was the Ministry of Energy's responsibility to lead. OEFC had the lead—they were a party to a legal dispute with a company that had started back in the late 1990s and that only recently concluded.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So, just to keep it in simple, plain English: You're saying the OEFC was not involved in any of the discussions that led up to the \$180-million settlement with Eastern Power?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The Ministry of Energy had the lead with the OPA in terms of the negotiations on the relocation. It was their costing—the OPA's costing—of the \$180 million. The OEFC had the lead responsibility for settlement of this legal claim that goes all the way back to the late 1990s that originated from an original contract between Ontario Hydro for the Keele Valley—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I understand the Keele Valley part, but my question is—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I have to stop you there. The 20 minutes are up.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I was having so much fun.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I know you were, but that's why I'm stopping you now.

To the government, Ms. Cansfield.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you, Minister, for the conversation you had earlier. Actually, I'd like to ask a question that relates to some of the discussion you had. It's really about how the government is actually going to be reducing the deficit and getting Ontario back into a balanced budget. If you could share some of those thoughts with us, please.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, a little bit of history: Prior to the downturn in 2008-09, we had balanced

three budgets in a row and we had, in fact, eliminated the hidden deficit that had been left behind by the previous Conservative government. As I indicated in the budget, there are many difficult choices ahead in order to balance by 2017-18. Many other governments around the world and indeed here in Canada face very similar challenges.

Here are some of the initiatives included in the budget that are designed to help get us back to balance. First: freezing the general corporate income tax rate and the business education tax rate reductions until the budget is balanced. In both cases, those taxes have come down quite dramatically over the course of the last number of years, as a result of decisions of this government. The third party, on the corporate tax, suggested the freeze of the rate at where it's at as of July 1 of this year. We thought that was reasonable and responsible in the circumstances, and does help get us there.

We've also capped the Ontario clean energy benefit at 3,000 kilowatts per month.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, we're changing the Ontario drug benefit program so that about 5% of the wealthiest seniors, those with the highest incomes, will pay a larger share of their prescription drug costs. I don't know about you, but I heard repeatedly from people of better means, retired people who were better off, that they couldn't understand why they got their drugs free, essentially. We're pleased with the reception that has had.

We're ensuring that Ontario user fees recover more of the cost of providing programs and services. Governments of all political stripes over the years have been reluctant to raise user fees, for a whole variety of reasons. The challenge with that is, over time, if the fee stays the same and the cost of delivering the service goes up, then you're borrowing the money to provide the service because the fees haven't kept up. So we're moving a number of fees up in order to recover costs. Something called the Eurig decision compels us to recover only the cost. If we go beyond recovering the cost, then it's viewed as a tax. So, we are, in fact, moving to recover the costs associated with providing a service, whether it's the tags for your vehicle licence, your driver's licence—those are the ones that most Ontarians are familiar with.

We found savings in the capital plan which will result in reduced borrowing of more than \$3 billion over the next six years.

Over the next three years, to go back—it's right in the budget—there are \$4 of expense measures being taken for each dollar in revenue measures. That is, for each dollar in revenue increase, whether through freezing the corporate tax rate, the new tax bracket that was created for the highest-income Ontarians or freezing the corporate tax rate where it's at—for every dollar we get through revenue, that is, the money we get in, there's \$4 that we're taking out in program savings, expenditure reductions or cost avoidance. That's one that people tend to overlook but is very important, particularly in the out years.

We are ensuring that the annual average growth in program spending is held to 1% between 2011-12 and



2014-15. That's an extraordinary achievement. No government has ever done that in Ontario that I'm aware of. People talk about how spending is going up. They're right, but the rate of demand for things like health care and education goes up, based on the people who come in. So to say you're going to actually cut, I'd like to see how the Conservatives particularly are going to do that and what they are going to do to achieve it, because they haven't been clear about that. What they did when they were in office was they closed hospitals and schools and laid off teachers, nurses, meat inspectors, water inspectors—and, by the way, expenditure growth continued. It wasn't like they were reducing the overall footprint of government.

By the end of 2014-15, the fiscal action we've outlined in the budget will reduce the accumulated deficit by \$22.1 billion from what it would have otherwise been. So if we had just the status quo, that scenario that Don Drummond talked about, we will have reduced those expenditures by \$22.1 billion, at the same time, Donna, as we continue to make the important investments in maintaining the progress we've made in education and health care.

In 2011-12, our program spending per capita is projected to be \$8,540. That, by the way, is the lowest among the provinces and considerably below the average across the other nine provincial governments. That was a point that Don Drummond made in his report when he said, in spite of what some would say, Ontario's spending is actually not out of control. In fact, it is the lowest of the provinces on a per capita basis.

The government's approach to managing spending isn't just about saving money; it's also about reforming the programs and services to ensure that they continue to deliver the results that we need on a sustainable basis. We believe our approach is balanced, we believe it's fair, and it's responsible. The five-year plan will balance the budget by 2017-18 while protecting those investments that I spoke about earlier.

So we're seeing incredible transformation going on across a range of programs and services. There will be more of that in the weeks and months ahead.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Oh, sorry. Mr. Dhillon.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you very much, Minister, for appearing before this committee this morning.

Could you tell us what the government is doing to restrain its own salary increases?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In the 2012 budget, we proposed that MPP pay would be frozen for another two years, bringing the total length of pay freeze to five years. Our government believes that it's an honour and privilege to serve the people of Ontario and it is public service.

During this time, it's critical that we continue to focus our attention to protecting the continued investments our government has made in education and health care. Again, I keep coming back to this, but that is at the es-

sence of what we are doing. We have made considerable progress in education and health care. As the Premier often says, there is still more to do. Those are our priority areas and we will continue to make those investments, but leading by example is, in our view, doing the right thing for Ontarians.

That's what we are doing with MPPs and the leadership of the provincial government.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. MacCharles.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, and welcome, Minister.

When I talk to folks about the budget, people seem very happy about the plan to tackle the deficit while at the same time preserving the gains we've made in health care and education, as you said.

**1020**

Can you talk a bit more about how the government, and the Ministry of Finance in particular, has found and is continuing to find cost savings? Sometimes, as you said earlier, people forget that there are actually elements of the budget that speak to savings.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This whole process is actually an annual process; it starts in the fall of the year preceding with something we call results-based plans. We ask ministries to look for efficiencies and hold the line on their own spending.

Within finance, for instance, I'm pleased to report that our planned operating spending for 2012-13 is \$1.7 billion less than our voted operating appropriation in the 2011-12 period. I should point out, in fairness, that this reduction includes the \$1.4 billion provided in 2011-12 to assist Ontarians during the transition to the harmonized sales tax. The estimates also incorporate administrative savings resulting from the wind-down of the retail sales tax program as a result of the move to the HST.

Remember: One of the advantages to harmonizing the sales tax was, instead of having the federal government administering the GST and the provincial government administering the PST, we agreed to consolidate that. A number of our employees moved to the federal government, so that reduced our employment footprint quite considerably.

More importantly, it reduced the regulatory burden on business. I think it has been, in one fell swoop, probably the largest reduction in regulatory burden since we eliminated paying separate corporate taxes to the federal and provincial governments. That's a good example of some of the really important strides we've made. In the old days, you had two binders of regs roughly this thick that businesses had to follow. Now they've only got one. They only have to worry about one appeal, and they only have to worry about one set of auditors coming in. Most businesses that I've been meeting with, including the large organizations that represent them, including the CFIB, recognize that this is an important step forward in terms of managing the regulatory environment.

I don't want to brag too much more about my ministry, but they've done a terrific job, as have our other senior

public servants, who do good work for all Ontarians on a routine basis.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. Sandals.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Good to see you this morning, Minister. When you talk to people in the community, they talk about “We’ve struggled through the recession; we’re recovering,” and then they want to know, “But what are you on the government side, the public service side, doing in terms of you having to tighten your belt?” I know that that’s something that at treasury board, Minister, we’ve focused on a lot. I wonder if you could share with us some of the work that’s being done to make the Ontario public service more efficient, more streamlined.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Thank you, Liz. You and Donna have both had the opportunity to serve on treasury board and have made an enormous contribution.

Since 2009, our government has been working to reduce the size of the OPS and enhance the efficiency of public service delivery in Ontario. It should be noted that Ontario delivers public services with the lowest number of provincial public servants across the country; that is something that is often overlooked. However, we’re still working hard to make the Ontario public service more efficient to deliver better value to Ontarians. We’re on track to reduce the size of the OPS by 4,900 full-time equivalent staff between the 2009 budget and March 31, 2014, saving close to half a billion dollars each year. This target will be achieved by transforming the way government delivers programs and services to ensure value for taxpayer dollars and by finding organizational efficiencies within the OPS. The government has considered the recommendations of the Drummond commission in this regard and is making its decisions.

Details on staffing reductions that contribute to savings and avoid costs continue to be announced by the government. For example, the 2011 budget announced the transfer of responsibility for the collection of sales and corporate taxes to the federal government, which will save the province approximately \$150 million annually.

The government has achieved its full commitment of a 5% reduction in the size of the Ontario public service while ensuring that our focus remains on delivering critical public services. It’s important to note that over two thirds of the 3,400 full-time equivalent reductions were achieved through attrition. Of those who received layoff notices, most were redeployed into other jobs, which is contrary to the approach that others would take which would simply be sweeping cuts to the Ontario public service and, as a result, would diminish the quality of public services in the province. The average age of the public service is quite up there, so there is an opportunity now, working with AMAPCEO, working with OPSEU, working with our non-bargained employees as well, to transform and, through attrition, through other measures, to help reduce the impact, at the same time as we reduce overall employment in the Ontario public service.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you, Minister. Actually, the last few days I’ve been having a number of

discussions with folks on a variety of issues but in particular around the managing of the deficit and focusing on the budget. I can speak for my own constituency how important it is to manage that budget and to reduce the deficit and get our books back to balancing.

There has been a lot said about the processes that we’ve been putting in place, and I wonder if you could share some information around the issue of the legislated public sector wage freeze and, at the same time, some discussion about bargaining and the rights of employees.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think that’s an extremely important question. First, it’s important to note that all the provinces in Canada are bound by the same constitutional protection for collective bargaining. The PCs, unfortunately, haven’t done their homework in this regard. Their approach to a legislated wage freeze without consultation or negotiation would end up in the Supreme Court.

British Columbia showed us that when governments rush, without proper consultation with labour stakeholders, those groups have recourse through the courts. It has also been shown that the courts will undo the government’s actions.

Our government’s approach is one that is balanced and understands the collective bargaining process but also understands the fiscal challenges our government must deal with to protect our gains in education and health care.

Mr. Hudak talks about \$2 billion in additional savings, but the current fiscal plan already accounts for no incremental increases in compensation. The budget includes \$6 billion in savings over three years through compensation restraint, including school boards, physicians and other public servants in both the public and broader public sectors.

The budget is also about making tough choices, while at the same time creating jobs and protecting the investments that have been made and continue to be made in health care and education. By working together, we have been able to achieve shorter hospital wait times, better access to a family doctor, smaller classes, and a higher graduation rate and test scores.

The PCs, on the other hand, want to make different choices. When in power, they cut public services, and Ontario families paid the ultimate price. The PCs have a terrible record when it comes to labour relations, specifically with education and health care. When the PCs were in power, they fired 15,000 teachers, closed 500 schools and, worst of all, Ontario students lost more than 26 million learning days. Their mismanagement resulted in lower test scores, one in three students dropping out, larger class sizes and a diminished learning experience.

We will balance the budget while at the same time protecting jobs and protecting the investments we’ve made in education and health care.

The PCs also have a poor record when it comes to health care in Ontario. Rather than investing in our province’s health care infrastructure, they fired 6,200 nurses, closed 28 hospitals and added no new medical school spaces. Their lack of investment and poor choices led to a



fractured health care system which had the longest wait times in Canada. Their broken system also left one million Ontarians without access to a family physician.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much, Minister.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Dhillon.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you very much, Chair. Minister, can you tell us how the 2012 budget will protect teaching positions in Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes. In the Drummond report, Mr. Drummond recommended increasing class sizes at all levels. Increased class sizes means a higher student-to-teacher ratio and fewer teaching positions. So as you raise the number of students in a class, you reduce the number of teachers who are needed, particularly in areas where there's declining enrolment. The commission also recommended cancelling full-day kindergarten, which would result in further losses in teaching positions.

The 2012 budget takes a different approach by exercising restraint in other areas, including compensation. By keeping classes sizes low, the government is preserving thousands of teaching positions—particularly for young teachers, I might add—and the continued investments that have been made in education. For instance, adopting the Drummond commission's recommendation on class sizes and cancelling full-day kindergarten would have resulted in the loss of approximately 10,000 teaching positions, which would significantly impact the educational development of our children when it's most critical.

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In addition, the government is protecting 9,700 non-teaching positions which were recommended for elimination in the Drummond report and which the Conservatives have said they would eliminate if they were elected.

The current labour framework agreement for school board staff expires on August 31, 2012. The 2012 budget includes funding to meet the government's remaining commitment under the current labour framework. The government's proposed approach to discussions with school board staff is reflected in our budget for the 2012-13 school year and onward.

In order to preserve the gains in education while balancing the budget, the government has put forward parameters for a new labour framework that manages costs while protecting classrooms.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. MacCharles.

**Mrs. Tracy MacCharles:** Minister, I think we all agree that the fiscal climate requires strong action, as outlined in the budget, and we tend to focus on the financial aspects of that.

But another important topic that keeps coming up is poverty in Ontario. We know that ties to other elements of the budget: health care, education and jobs.

Can you talk a bit about how the budget specifically provides for continued reduction of poverty in Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The government is taking important steps, in our view, to reform programs and ser-

vices to ensure that they continue to deliver the supports and social services Ontarians need, and on a sustainable basis. Our innovative approach does not involve across-the-board program cuts. It involves pursuing ways to transform and improve service delivery while reducing costs.

Moving forward, the government will continue, as I indicated earlier, to implement full-day kindergarten—this is an important component of poverty reduction—and continue to deliver important programs such as the youth opportunities strategy, the Student Nutrition Program and Pathways to Education.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that, I'm going to have to stop you. You're going to have to come back to that.

Official opposition.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, I noticed you've obviously brought your talking points. We're going to move on to a subject that we've talked about in our last few rotations, and that's back to the Mississauga relocation of the power plant.

I'd like to ask you this. You made some comments to the media on July 16. People often ask, when we're out there—you know what? This was a Liberal government decision to build the power plant in Mississauga initially—one that our party, for the record, said we would not have undertaken in the first place—only for the government, the Liberal Party or Don Guy or whoever, to make the decision to then cancel the power plant, costing Ontarians \$190 million. People often say what that would pay for. They reference 900 doctors for a year, the 21,000 people in my community who are short a family doctor. The list goes on and on in terms of what \$190 million could pay for.

They want to know that decisions like this, mistakes like this, don't occur again, so we're going to ask a few questions pertaining to the decision-making process, now knowing that in fact Oakville, which is about three times the size of Mississauga, will be the second figure to hit taxpayers this year in terms of just sheer waste.

You said on July 16, "I'm part of this government. It was a government decision, and, you know, we made a commitment to the people of Mississauga and Etobicoke during the election, which we are fulfilling." Minister, you just told this committee that it was a campaign decision. Which one is it: Was it a government decision? A campaign decision? Which one is it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was a campaign undertaking made, a campaign commitment, and the government, once elected, fulfilled its undertaking to the people of Mississauga and Etobicoke.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We've mentioned before that the Premier actually had a meeting with Hazel McCallion back in February 2011, and in fact in that meeting he said he would be cancelling the power plant. The government then announced it in September—a massive delay in there.

Again, it was a campaign decision made by the government of the day. Were you a part of that campaign decision?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think I've answered that question about 14 times now, so I'd refer you to Hansard.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You said earlier, too, that the politics of this decision were talked about in cabinet. Do you want to allude to that or expand on politics?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. I gave a full answer earlier.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** And what was that answer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd refer you to Hansard. Thank you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. I'll bring up an email, in fact, that we received last week as part of the Minister of Energy's package. It was, in fact, an email from Rick Jennings, the assistant deputy minister of the Ministry of Energy. He referred to the Liberals winning all five seats in Mississauga handily. What would that have to do with the cancellation of the gas plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't have the email in front of me, so I wouldn't rely strictly on one aspect of it. If you could share the full thing with me, I might. By the way, that's the Ministry of Energy, not the Ministry of Finance.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Do you believe there was an ulterior motive to the cancellation of the gas power plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think we wanted to respond to the overwhelming views of the people of Etobicoke and Mississauga. Just for the record, on September 24, 2011—this is a PC press release—"A Tim Hudak government will cancel this plant."

**Mr. Michael Harris:** A Tim Hudak government wouldn't have built the power plant in the first place.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, but you also said—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** The Premier said, though, when they made the commitment to build the power plant, throughout the process, these same folks in Mississauga—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You told us to cancel it, so we did. But more importantly, the people of Etobicoke and Mississauga told us to. Part of our job as politicians is to listen to the people.

The people of Sarnia-Lambton, by the way—let me just read you another quote. This is from a letter from MPP Bailey to Minister Duguid dated November 30, 2010: "I urge you to consider the benefits of keeping the Lambton generating station open and am prepared to support converting the plant to natural gas and biomass energy production."

We go further with Mayor Bradley, Mayor Arnold of St. Clair and Warden Burns of Lambton in a letter to the Premier: "With the recent decision not to move forward with the Oakville natural gas plant, we would urge you to consider that option now be applied to the Lambton generating station, which, as you are aware, by your government's direction, has just closed two units and has two more scheduled"—that's closing coal—"which will be fully closed by 2014."

We had two communities—large communities population-wise—that were clear and unequivocal they did not want the plants. Fair enough. We had an opportunity to give another community, which will benefit from—I think there are some 90-odd jobs associated with this—that welcomed it. In fact, your caucus colleagues, your leader, urged us to not proceed.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We'll get back to the whole Sarnia-Lambton decision later on.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And you provided no contingency in your own campaign numbers for that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, you know what? Ontarians expect governments to make good fiscal decisions. Unfortunately, over the last nine years we've not seen that—a record deficit; massive debt. In fact, payments to debt are one of the third-largest commitments today.

This was a decision made by your government to build this plant. In fact, the Premier said that he wasn't going to tolerate the NIMBYism effect throughout the process, only until, as you had stated last time, a review of the polls showed you down and it was a campaign decision to move that plant. Ontarians don't want governments to be reckless with their finances, which your government has done—in fact, \$190 million worth of reckless spending.

Your government made this commitment, only to, during the campaign, when five seats were in jeopardy of going south, step in and make a commitment to waste \$190 million to save five Liberal seats. Would you not agree with that assessment?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The people of Mississauga and Etobicoke were quite clear that they didn't want that plant and it was overwhelming—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Why didn't you listen to them previously?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We did.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** What happened a few years before? I believe—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We listened to them and we responded. We also listened to the call of your leader to not build the plant and to the call of the third party to not build the plant. So, here we are.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It's just amazing how, all of a sudden, days before an election campaign, and months prior—again, the Premier had stated that he wasn't going to tolerate this NIMBYism mentality and that this plant would proceed. People want to know: Who makes these decisions? Who is making these decisions in government? Is it Don Guy and the campaign team making major policy decisions? Who's making decisions that recklessly spend \$190 million? And on top of that, what will Ontarians see hit their tax bill for the cancellation of the Oakville plant, which is probably three times that?

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As the Premier said yesterday and I said Monday, it was ultimately the decision of the leader of the party to make that campaign undertaking.



**Mr. Michael Harris:** What do you tell people in your home riding of Windsor when they say—what do you tell people when they ask you why you just wasted \$190 million of taxpayers' money when there's so much need in Ontario for a variety of different things?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** A number of people in our community actually lobbied to get the plant moved there. We built one in Brighton Beach and opened it back in 2005. It employs 90 people. I was personally hoping that my community could benefit from it, but it made more sense, from a planning perspective and from an electricity perspective, to put it in Lambton.

The people in my community want us to stay focused on education and health care. The people in my community do not want us to close hospitals, which you would do. They do not want us to close schools, which you would do. They want a southwestern Ontario economic development fund, which you, sir, voted against and your colleague from Chatham voted against. They want us to keep full-day learning. They want us to continue to build the new engineering faculty we're building at the University of Windsor. They're proud of the fact that they now have a medical school. Those will continue to be our focuses.

By the way, they also recognize that—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me finish. You asked the question; you asked about the people of my community. You've given me an opportunity to respond.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But I asked about what they're saying about the wasting of \$190 million.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The people of my community rejected your leader and your party in October. The people of my community knew that we had made the commitment to cancel the plant as part of an election commitment. So the people of our community did have a chance to express their point of view, and I think they are interested, in my view, principally in ensuring that the gains we've made don't get lost as we move back to balance. The people of my community understand full well the kind of devastation that would have been brought about if the approach that your government took in its previous incarnation were to come back to Ontario.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But, Minister, the people of your riding did not know during the election what it was going to cost them to move that plant, because you hid it from them. You knew full well what the range would be to move or relocate that plant. You hid it from Ontarians until after the election.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If I may, sir, earlier you suggested that we made the decision without knowing the cost. Which is it?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, you tell me.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You've got to get your story straight between 9 o'clock and 11 o'clock.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You tell me. You knew the range of numbers.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I told you. We knew a range—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Why didn't you publicly—why wasn't it a line item under your contingency—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It wasn't in the budget. As I say, the full reporting of it will be very clear. It was a campaign undertaking.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So you did know exactly, before the commitment, as to—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. You just said I did; then you said I didn't. You need to get—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, which one is it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Which one is it for you? You said earlier that I knew; now you say I didn't know. No, you said earlier I didn't know and now you say—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I was saying—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's very confusing. I think the people of Ontario need this to be clear.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I was saying that residents in your riding didn't know the cost of what that relocation was going to be.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The residents in my riding re-elected me on October 11, knowing that we would move the plant.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But the residents in your riding and Ontario did not know what the costs were going to be. So I'm asking you, did you know what the costs would be—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You told me earlier that I—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** —and did you hide it from Ontarians?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Earlier, you were critical because you said I didn't know, and now you say I knew. What I answered to you earlier is that we did not know precisely. We did not know if we'd get a settlement. So, no, we didn't know. But you can't say one thing one hour and another thing another, so at least be consistent.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** No, I'm just simply saying that your residents in your riding—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, you're being confusing. You're playing fast and loose—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Order. I'm asking that it be just one person at a time. I mean, I'm watching the poor interpreter up there, and she's trying to give two conversations at once. Please, if you can possibly do it, one conversation, so that it can be translated for all of those people who are trying to listen in French. Okay?

**L'hon. Dwight Duncan:** Alors, les conservateurs ne donnaient pas un estimé dans leur contrat avec les gens de l'Ontario pour établir un prix de déménager le plant de Mississauga à une autre location. There you go.

Just to help the translator, I'll remind you that in spite of the fact that you had committed to move that plant, there was no accounting for it in your campaign platform either, or the amount associated with it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I just think people, when we're out there, want to know how these decisions are made, because \$190 million, as I had stated before, in fact, represents the operating budgets of two fairly significant ministries. That's a significant commitment.

You had known about this in November. A question for you: This week you came out and stated—you actually contradicted your Minister of Energy, because last week he had said it was \$180 million. Did you have a discussion with the Minister of Energy prior to your announcement this week?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, our ministries did. By the way, the minister was absolutely correct. The cost of relocating was \$180 million. We felt, upon reflection on the Keele Valley transaction, which was separate and apart from this, that it was prudent to disclose that because of the legal nature. The settlement had not been reached at that point, by the way. The settlement was just reached recently.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** How recently was that settlement reached? Between the time—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Tuesday.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** —Minister Bentley came in to committee—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It was Tuesday. Tuesday this week. So we felt it prudent to, given the fact that that resolution, at the time I announced it, had been agreed to but not signed on, as I recall—Deputy, is that correct? We felt that, as soon as the settlement had been reached, it was appropriate to disclose.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So why, when negotiations were still ongoing, did the Minister of Energy release the statement of it costing the taxpayers \$180 million when actually—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Because they were separate matters by separate ministries. In fact, one was by the Ontario Power Authority and the other was by the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., which does have a direct accountability to the Ministry of Finance. So you had two separate events.

What we felt it was important to disclose once the settlement had been reached—and we actually disclosed once the settlement had been reached but before it had been signed so that people would be aware that this other transaction was happening. It had been ongoing, by the way, since 1998, Deputy, if I'm not mistaken, and it was related to another matter entirely.

That being said, we decided the moment the settlement was reached that we needed to disclose it, so we came out with it. The Minister of Energy was absolutely correct when he stated that the relocation costs were \$180 million. The one thing we did add this morning, as I said to Mr. Bisson: There may be a variance, either positive or negative, in that. It may come in at \$178 million; it may come in at \$182 million. But that is the best estimate. On a project of this order of magnitude there are bound to be change orders in construction, bound to be unanticipated savings and unanticipated costs. There will be some variance around that number.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But your ministry is involved now or was involved in all those undertakings.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We were not involved in the relocation. The separate Keele Valley thing, which goes back to 1998, is related to contracts that were signed, I

think, in 1994 under a non-utility generating program that had been established by the government of the day. My deputy took you through the issues that were before the courts, the findings of various courts through this process. A settlement was reached on the weekend, possibly on Monday, and signed on Tuesday morning. In the interest of full disclosure, even though it was an unrelated matter, a different matter, we felt it important to disclose that addition.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But again, your ministry worked with the Ministry of Energy in terms of assessing and allocating the \$190 million.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, no; not on the \$180 million. They're separate items.

In fact, it was the OPA, working with the ministry—the OPA reports through the Ministry of Energy. The decision that the government had to take which was a government decision, not an OPA decision, was the question of: Would this come from the rate base or the tax base? I recognize that it's largely the same group of people, but that was a government decision. It was at that point that finance, once there was a number reached, an accord with the proponent of the plant reached—at that point, the government's next decision—that's when finance became involved—was: How do we manage it? We had built-in contingencies so that the government would have the option, should it reach a settlement, of either doing it on the tax base or the rate base.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** That being said, you'll provide, as an earlier request from the committee today, those documents from that step forward to this committee. You had committed to providing those documents, as per standing order 110(b).

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have committed to ask the Minister of Energy to provide that information.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** No, but you said that your ministry was involved. From that statement you just made, we are wanting to get information pertaining—the ministry's involvement from that standpoint forward, this committee is asking you to provide documents to this committee, as per standing order 110(b).

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I will fulfill all of my obligations, both legal and in the standing orders, to this committee.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So when can we expect those documents?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know. But I will fulfill all of my legal obligations.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** To this committee. I guess I'll turn it over to my colleague Rick. He had a few questions outstanding, still.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And he has about a minute and three quarters.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Can I defer that to our next 20 minutes?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Just use it. You can ask the question and it can be answered in the next—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Randy, you have the floor.



**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Minister, you have said that you have listened to the people in Mississauga about moving the gas plant. They didn't want it there, so you listened to them. Your government made the decision to move it and made that campaign promise in September. Did you poll the residents of Mississauga about whether they wanted it there?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** You had no poll?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I didn't.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** So you just got this through your candidates that were running in that election. Is that correct?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. It was all over the news. It was in newspapers. We did meet with the mayors. We meet with local mayors. I did meet with Mayor McCallion—not on this issue, but she did raise it with me. I've met with the mayor of Brampton. I have met with councillors in the city of Toronto, not necessarily on this issue. I heard from our local members. I read the newspapers. I watched the news.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Here's my question, sir. May I ask a question, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You asked it. I'm just answering.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** We did a poll in my riding of Perth—Wellington. There's a wind farm project going up. Ninety-six per cent of the people who were polled do not want that project going in there. Will you listen to them, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Every circumstance is different. We have an important policy—

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** No, sir. Will you listen to them?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have a policy to develop renewable energy sources in Ontario, which is effective—

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Sir, you tolerate NIMBYism in Mississauga that you won't tolerate in the country. Why won't you listen to the people in the country on these wind farm issues?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have built other power plants where it wasn't popular. We have put in windmills where it is popular.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Well, then put these—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'll have to stop you there. I'm going to stop you. You can come back to that on the next round. Mr. Bisson, the floor is now yours.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm a little bit, at this point, Minister, perplexed, because what you were saying in the last round of questioning is that there were no formal discussions at cabinet prior to the election in regard to the cancellation. I just asked staff to go through the documents that we received from the Ministry of Energy that this committee requested. I've got one document here dated June 7, 2011, that essentially looks at the power plant and what the ramifications are for cancellation. That's one document, right from the Ministry of Energy—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Is that a cabinet document, Gilles?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** This is a document that was supplied to us.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Is that a cabinet document?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It comes from the ministry. That's what I said.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So it's not a cabinet document.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, but my point is—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I did indicate that there was stuff going on in the Ministry of Energy. That's an energy document. I can't answer for you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's fine.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I just want to be clear; that's not a cabinet document.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And I want to be clear as well. My time. Hang on. On June 7, 2011, there's a document prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Energy that looks at the pros and cons of the cancellation of that plant and the other one in Oakville, and then there's one on January 10, 2011. I'm not clear who presented this one. It's somebody within the government, but I'm just looking through it very quickly here as to who did it. But the point is, there are two documents here, clearly prior to the election, having pros and cons. I know, from being in government, that when these kinds of documents are created, they're normally created in order to give the minister some options. Normally, a minister goes to cabinet every week and says, "By the way, just so you know, we're having these discussions. Here are my options." You still maintain that there was no discussion at cabinet, prior to the election last year, on the cancellation of these gas plants?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think I indicated that there were discussions at cabinet and in caucus. I'll have to check precisely what I said an hour ago, but there is no minute that I'm aware of. I believe I attended most of the cabinet meetings at the time. That, I don't believe, is a cabinet document. I did indicate at the time that there's no doubt that there were many discussions going on with the Ministry of Energy. I wasn't privy to those. I wasn't the minister at the time. With respect to those documents, I'd have to refer your questions to the Minister of Energy because I don't recall seeing them and I'm not even sure what's in them.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The point I'm trying to get at—and I'm not saying that this is a cabinet document; I clearly said that this is from the Ministry of Energy and some other ministry, one document dated June 7, 2011, and the other one January 10, 2011, both of which talk about what the ramifications are for cancellation of those plants. My point is: If the ministries are having this conversation—the other one is the Ministry of the Environment, if I understand it correctly as I read through it, but I can double-check that. So, I've got two ministries of the crown prior to the last election who are preparing documents to give pros and cons of the cancellation. I have to assume that at least two ministers knew about this, and

there was no formal discussion at cabinet prior to the election about cancelling those power plants?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No formal discussion—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, I take you at your word.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I did indicate in my earlier answer that there may well have been informal discussions—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, informal discussions, but there was—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If I may, please, give me a chance to respond.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Please do.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Just to reiterate what I said earlier, this was a highly publicized issue. We heard from caucus colleagues. I'm sure that options were being devised to see what options would be available to a government should it decide to take a decision. To the best of my knowledge, there was no minute with respect to this out of a cabinet meeting, no formal discussion, but it doesn't surprise me that those kinds of option papers were being generated because it was a very highly topical issue. I don't recall if there were questions in the Legislature at the time. I assume that there might have been some, so it doesn't surprise me. As I indicated earlier, there were certainly informal discussions around it. It was talked about quite a bit, both within caucus and cabinet but more importantly in the general public.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, so you're more or less maintaining that the decision was a decision by the Liberal Party of Ontario as a campaign commitment to cancel those plans, right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The decision was to make a campaign commitment that, if elected, we would cancel the plant. It was not a decision of the government. The government made the final decision, by the way, once it had full information with respect to (a) whether or not we could get a settlement, and (b) if we could proceed with it or if there may have been other impediments to it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So the Liberal Party made a decision and, during the election, a commitment. Did they have conversations with the government in some way in coming up with that decision?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, we—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, did they have a discussion—you said no; I take you at your word. Did they have a discussion with any of the agencies of the government to come up to that decision?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have a range of, among us—for instance, on the campaign team, a variety of people, like you. We have outside, non-government people who provide us advice, whom we turn to for campaign undertakings. When the Premier made the decision, he would have had the benefit of discussing it and getting advice from outside of the Liberal Party and outside of the government. He would obviously, having been Premier for, at that time, eight years and having been part of the decision-making process that brought on I forget how many thousand megawatts of new power, including the gas plants, have been fairly informed in respect to the

challenges that would be associated with the plant relocation—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** In fairness, Minister, at this point you're ragging the puck, and I have a question. So, the Liberal Party made a decision in the last election to make a commitment, should you get re-elected, that you would scrap these plants. We understand that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, that we'd move it—re-locate it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes; it wouldn't be constructed in that area. It would cause this \$180-million expenditure, and climbing.

What I'm trying to get at is: When the Liberal Party made the decision, did they or did they not get in touch with the OEFC, the OPA, any of those people?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** In terms of the dealings with the company, the OPA was the responsible agency dealing with the relocation. The Ministry of Energy provides oversight to that organization. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for oversight for the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. There was a long history around the Keele Valley site that the OEFC was actively involved in. The Ministry of Finance's role was with regard to the settlement of that contract.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Would the OPA or anybody outside of the Liberal Party of Ontario have acknowledged that this decision was coming down during the election? Were they alerted?

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, they wouldn't have been. It was a campaign decision. It was a campaign undertaking.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So they would not have been alerted to the decision?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Who?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** OPA, OEFC, Ministry of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not in the normal course of things. It was a campaign undertaking; it was not a government undertaking.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, in the documents that we got from your Minister of Energy, there's an email here from September 23 of last year, smack dab in the middle of the election, from a pretty reliable source: Colin Andersen, head of the OPA. It says, "A political announcement may go out Saturday morning"—pretty goldam specific, what day the announcement's going to be made—"that might have an impact on one of our initiatives. I would remind everyone that we don't comment in any way on political platforms or individual promises until after the election. These are promises, not government policies."

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes. That's right.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But the point is, OPA was aware that the Liberal Party was going to make the announcement. How did that happen?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There had been plenty of speculation in the media that we were going to do it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you're thinking they just were pretty clairvoyant about all of this?



**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's all—Gilles, that's the best answer—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. They're clairvoyant.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. It was all over the news for several days and speculation was present for weeks that it might happen, so I think Mr. Andersen was simply cautioning his officials that this is not a government policy, which it wasn't. It was a campaign undertaking. He's quite correct—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, I understand it's a campaign undertaking.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and he wanted his officials to be careful, because quite—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let's agree that it was a campaign undertaking.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It was a campaign commitment—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's right.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and what he was doing, quite candidly—you could well have been the Minister of Energy last October, and he did not—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Not unless I would have crossed the floor, and I'm not about to do that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, no. But had things turned out differently—so he was doing, I think, what's appropriate for the public service, cautioning his folks, "Do not comment on this because this is not a government policy." I'm glad you flagged me to that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So this email is strictly based on their understanding of what they read in the media, and at no time was OPA flagged, or anybody else, of the Liberal announcement officially?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As far as I know, Gilles; as far as I know.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. You're on the record. That's all I wanted.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's the OPA, which I'm not responsible for. So you'll have to, more appropriately, put that to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right. Give me a second here. I want to get through these questions.

How did the Liberal Party know what the heck the range was going to be for the settlement? Because you talked about earlier that the Liberal Party knew there was a range of numbers that it would cost to make this decision, and obviously the Liberal Party had to cost that in their platform, as far as balancing the budget by 2017-18. So how did they come up to the numbers on the range? Did OPA provide it? Did OEFC provide it? Ministry of Finance? Minister of Energy? Any or a combination?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I mean, for instance, on our campaign committee we had a number of lawyers and others who have experience in these kinds of matters. We might have spoken to people in the energy sector who might have some knowledge. But I think the answer wouldn't have been that we had a specific number; we didn't know that we could even get a settlement. What we would have said, and the thinking that would have gone on, I suspect, in the campaign committee—I wasn't

part of the campaign committee—is, is there enough contingency in our platform numbers to meet whatever obligations would result from this undertaking? And they would have satisfied themselves that, yes, there was.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So I just want, for the record, to be clear: The Liberal Party did not have formal contact with the government or one of its agencies in coming up with the numbers so they could make this decision?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the best of my knowledge, no.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, that's all I wanted.

I want to get to the Keele Valley part of it, because the Keele Valley issue was an issue that had been brewing around since the early 1990s with Eastern Power and the government of Ontario in regard to that contract.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's correct.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Eastern Power was pretty clear. It would appear from the documents that I look at that they more or less took a position—and I just want you to say, yes or no, this is the case. But it's my read through these documents that they sort of said, "We're not talking to you until you settle the Keele Valley thing. Don't talk to me about Mississauga. I've still got a lawsuit with you guys. Settle that one and I'll talk to you about Mississauga." Is that more or less what happened?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, and that's why we disclosed the \$10 million.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. No, no; I'm just trying to make the connection. Okay.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And as soon as we had settled that—which was settled this week—that is precisely why we included that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So my read through it is correct, and essentially this was a way to get them to—that was a condition put by Eastern Power, so that's fine.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's correct.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Was there anything added to the Eastern Power settlement on Keele Valley as a sweetener, to get there, beyond what we would have normally paid?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Deputy, I'm going to turn to you for that.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Let me recap just briefly the Keele Valley court settlement. Part of the Keele Valley court settlement was, the courts were very clear that they were entitled to damages.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But the amount was never—

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The Superior Court judge said, "I don't have the information to determine the damages, but if I had to give nominal damages, it would be \$5 million." Then the next court said, "You probably can't do it through nominal damages. You need to go through a very detailed review of damages," and there were different ranges. In fact, it went much higher. The company had asked for \$13 million. Their claims went higher than \$13 million. For the precise number, we can get back to you.

The question was: Because this was outstanding, how can we resolve this without going through protracted legal discussions on determining the damages associated

with the Ontario Hydro contract with Eastern Power for Keele Valley that then was transferred to the Ontario Electricity Financing Corp.?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To the answer to my question: Did you have to sweeten the deal to get them to settle?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The Ontario Electricity Financing Corp. had the original \$5 million nominal, but the court ruled that that wasn't sufficient. The court said, "No, you have to go through a more detailed review of those costs." The company had asked for significantly above that amount. The choice was to either go through that lengthy court process to determine the amount of the damages, or put a settlement that met with what the OEFC board felt was reasonable and justifiable, from an audit perspective, and put forth a \$10-million settlement.

The settlement was contingent on the other negotiations being concluded, and once that happened, the finalization occurred this week. The money was transferred. The OPA payment earlier of \$10 million—the OPA was refunded a portion of that legal settlement as part of another agreement the OPA had with the company.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To the answer to the original question: Did you have to sweeten the deal to get them to move off Keele Valley so you can get to the Mississauga settlement?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The OEFC board would say that the \$10 million was—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I see the minister shaking his head up and down. I take it the answer is yes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. Give him—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just was trying to understand what you were trying to tell me, Minister. Sorry.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The OEFC board felt that the \$10-million estimate was reasonable, based on the information and the adjudication and the review by the courts that said, "Look at a number of things." It was an inter-area transmission credit that Eastern Power wasn't eligible for, but they were asking that they should be.

The court said that in determining that amount, a number of factors would have to be considered. Do they get the full credit? Do you provide interest? Remember, this is going back to the mid-1990s. So the OEFC board—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I asked a very short question that took two seconds to ask, and you're now two minutes into the answer. I understand how this place works. I was just asking a simple question: Did you have to increase the settlement in order to get them to settle? Yes or no? That's all I'm asking.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. We simply had to reach—and that's why we disclosed the full \$10 million.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, fine. That's fine. The second question is: It would be safe to presume there would still be no settlement, possibly, with Keele Valley, had it not been for the pressure put on settling Keele Valley because of Mississauga, right? The Mississauga situation accelerated the settlement of Keele Valley: yes or no?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** It was a factor to conclude resolution on that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, the answer is yes. Okay, I got you. I don't want to be combative.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Don't, please—no, no—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I don't want to be combative.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There's not an easy yes or no. I need to respond to this.

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**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** My deputy is trying to give you—and he's trying to be transparent and accountable. There are not easy yeses or noes here.

I need to say this. What I indicated to you earlier, Gilles, and I will restate: One of the reasons we declared the \$10 million was in fact because one of the factors that went into that settlement was the issue of trying to get a settlement on the relocation plan.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I've got two minutes, so please.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Fair enough, but I have to simply say that the deputy was giving you full disclosure. It was one factor. I said earlier and I will stress—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It was a factor. That's all I wanted—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And I will stress—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's a factor in the decision; I understand that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And I will stress, and I need to put on the record—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You did, three times now.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I just want to make sure it's clearly understood—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Now you're ragging the puck.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —because you're trying to distill something into a simple yes/no which doesn't lend itself to a simple yes/no.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It certainly added to the motivation to settle. That's the point.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, which I indicated, I think, at around 9 o'clock this morning.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's all I was asking. I'm not being combative. I just asked a question.

You answered earlier that the OPA and others were not notified by the Liberal Party of the decision, other than what they saw in the public domain. Did anybody from the Liberal Party, after the decision, contact the OPA, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Finance and say, "Okay, guys. Here's what we did"?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the best of my knowledge, not until after we returned to government.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So none of that happened until after.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the best of my knowledge.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right. How much time do I have?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Not much. One minute.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** One minute. I guess the last question is: When can we expect the settlement on Oakville? When would you expect that?



**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll pass that question on to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And as far as costs, we're not sure. It could be anything.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can't speculate on that, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right. I don't have enough time to really work up a good question here. I'm not going to rag the puck.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay, on to the government. Ms. MacCharles had the floor the last time. I'll cede it to you.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Minister, when the round of questioning was over on this side, you were in the process of talking about how the budget addresses continued reduction in poverty, so I'm just wondering if you wanted to continue with that, or we can move on.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Sure. Yes. Poverty reduction is an important part. I had indicated at the concluding of the last round that full-day kindergarten is part of that. I talked about the youth opportunities strategy, the Student Nutrition Program, Pathways to Education. We will continue to implement the comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, which we believe is an extremely important part of our poverty reduction strategy. We will provide additional resources to the Second Career program—I indicated in my opening statement how successful that has been—and additional resources to the Ontario student financial assistance program. We talked about the 30% tuition grant. We are moving forward in providing additional child care supports. We've increased the Ontario child benefit to \$1,310 in 2014, a change that will extend benefits to an additional 90,000 children in 46,000 families. We're building on the advice of the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario to reform the social assistance system to make it more sustainable by reducing barriers and ensuring that people who are able to work have access to the right supports to find employment while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.

It's quite comprehensive. It builds on the anti-poverty strategy that the government developed a number of years ago and we believe will help over time to reduce particularly the level of child poverty in Ontario.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. Sandals.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Minister, in your earlier remarks, you mentioned the whole concept of transformation. Certainly, given the size of the health budget, one sector where transformation is absolutely required, absolutely key, is the health sector. I wonder if you could give us a bit of an explanation as to the government's plans to modernize health care, to enhance health care delivery in Ontario.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, sure. Absolutely, Liz. Thank you for the question. The McGuinty government has and remains committed to increasing access to quality health care for all Ontarians. In fact, between 2003-04 and 2011-12, we increased health sector funding at an

average rate of 6.1% annually, for a total increase of \$17.9 billion.

When in power, the PCs cut recklessly and made the wrong choices, such as closing hospitals. Our investments have improved health care in Ontario after years of neglect and have produced meaningful improvements for Ontario families.

But with the current fiscal challenge, we recognize that funding for the health care system cannot continue to grow at past rates. Health spending is driven by inflation, population growth, aging, the cost of new drugs and related technology, and a number of other factors. All of these factors individually and collectively exert pressure on the fiscal plan. If no changes were made to transform the way health care is delivered and how health costs are managed, these factors would continue to drive health spending up by 4.5% per year. The delivery of health care has to be transformed to continue to provide high-quality health care services that Ontarians need and expect.

That's why the McGuinty government is working with its health care partners to bring about a transformation to a more sustainable, higher-quality health care system which would reduce the growth rate from 4.5% to 2.3% in 2012-13, this current fiscal year. We appear at this point to be continuing to meet our targets in that regard. We are focusing on better value for money and creating a system that delivers health care in a smarter and more efficient way that will lead to better outcomes for all Ontarians.

Our government's plan is based on three key strategies to realize better value for money. The first involves shifting investments to where they have the greatest value and health care benefit. Second, we are preventing illness and helping Ontarians stay healthy and active by focusing on health promotion, including reducing smoking rates and childhood obesity. Third, we are providing better access to primary care, home care and community care so patients can receive the care they need where they need it and when they need it.

The government will move ahead with the critical reform agenda through key measures in the budget to manage health care spending and build on the action plan for health care which was detailed by my colleague Deb Matthews, who, in my view, is doing an outstanding job on moving Ontario's health care system forward and improving access and quality at a rate that is sustainable from a fiscal perspective. Transforming the system is essential to managing the rate of health care spending growth to meet the government's commitment to balance the budget.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mrs. Cansfield.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Just building on that, there are folks, Minister, in our society that need some support now and then, and social assistance. I'm going to ask you maybe two questions together. One is, we've always had a commitment towards social assistance. What are we doing to sustain and maintain or to deal with that? The other is the whole idea of helping people, and I use the

minimum wage as an example, and what we've done with that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our government continues to be committed to supporting the families and individuals who are on social assistance. Since 2003, we have increased social assistance program expenditure by \$3.2 billion, or 75%. In 2012-13, the government is implementing a 1% rate increase for Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, resulting in \$55 million annually in additional benefits to families and individuals receiving social assistance. With the proposed 1% increase, social assistance rates would have increased by 14.9% compounded since the government took office in 2003. Where other governments have tried to balance their budgets on the backs of those who need assistance, we are choosing to increase the Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works payments by 1% in the fall of 2012.

To continue to protect the most vulnerable, we will drive reforms to our benefit programs to create a more efficient and integrated system that helps Ontarians get back to work.

I know you've done a lot of work, Donna, and had a lot to say about how municipalities deliver Ontario Works and we deliver ODSP. It's really quite astounding. We've got a commission that has been appointed to help the Minister of Community and Social Services look at where these efficiencies can be found, how we can better deliver all these programs and services.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** And a little bit about minimum wage?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We continue to raise the minimum wage. We're up to \$10.25 an hour, which is the highest among provinces. It's almost a 50% increase since 2003. But remember, it had been frozen, I think for the previous nine years, by the previous government. We chose not to do that.

In setting the minimum wage, the government considers the needs of both businesses and employees. So you had a nine-year freeze, and we brought it up—by the way, it was a campaign undertaking to bring it to \$10.25 in 2007, and we fulfilled that undertaking. It was clear, it was unequivocal, and it was made before the last election. Further increases right now, at a time when the global economy is weakening, could cause additional problems for our fragile job market, particularly for young workers.

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Our approach is multi-faceted, as you pointed out earlier. It's not just about minimum wage and social benefits. It's also about 30,000 fewer children now living in poverty in Ontario. It's about a range of other initiatives that I discussed earlier that help families deal with the reality, everything from the Ontario clean energy benefit through to improved, enhanced daycare. Full-day learning has an enormous positive impact, particularly on Ontario families of more modest means.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Dhillon?

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Minister, can you please discuss your infrastructure plan and the jobs that will be created?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, yes, Vic. Infrastructure investments, as you know, create high-quality employment and support growth in Ontario. Our planned investments of more than \$35 billion over the next three years will create and preserve more than 100,000 jobs, on average, each year.

During previous periods of restraint in Ontario, governments have significantly reduced key infrastructure investments. By contrast, this budget preserves a high level of infrastructure investment.

The McGuinty government will focus its infrastructure expenditures on the most critical areas, such as transportation networks, hospitals, and post-secondary institutions, to maximize return on investments. These investments will strengthen Ontario's economy for future growth and prosperity, and support the government's priorities in health care and education.

The province has carefully reviewed its capital plan and found savings to help Ontario balance the budget. This will result in reduced borrowing of more than \$900 million and provide—and that hospital in Brampton that you fought so hard for? Congratulations. It's beautiful. I had an opportunity to tour it. It was something. You delivered, and our colleagues in the Brampton area delivered. It was something that had gone on far too long. I remember when even Premier Davis came out in support, and the Tories had the audacity to picket an event that a former Conservative Premier was at. I think you should be proud of that, along with the investments you've made in Brampton in a range of things, including public transit, including roads. It's remarkable what you and your colleagues in Brampton and the whole Peel region have been able to do, and we've been pleased to support you in that. I don't believe it's a laughing matter. I think it's important. I think these are significant.

Some of the changes we have made will involve borrowing \$900 million less and provide fiscal savings of over \$120 million over three years, yet we still have a very robust infrastructure program moving forward. I applaud you and your colleagues who have fought and been very successful at helping address the infrastructure gap that had existed for many years, particularly in the Peel region.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you very much, Minister.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. MacCharles?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Just as I move to my next question—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** One question at a time.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I was just saying how efficient you were.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** I just want to say, as we enter our fourth hour here of questioning, first of all, thank you to you and the deputy for the extensive information you have provided on the gas plant. I hope others appreciate that it is important to talk about other aspects of the budget. We do want to continue with that, because



I think Ontarians do want to hear about the other elements of the budget, not just about the gas plants. I hope the opposition appreciates that as well.

Moving back to a health question, I'm wondering if you could tell us, Minister, a bit about how the budget addresses tobacco enforcement in Ontario.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That is a priority of this government, to strengthen the enforcement against the illegal manufacture and sale of tobacco products. My deputy minister is quite passionate about this particular issue, in his previous capacity as associate deputy at finance and deputy at revenue.

We have been working together with our partners—the First Nations, the federal government, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Cornwall Regional Task Force, police agencies, the province of Quebec and the state of New York—to develop solutions. Our government is engaging all stakeholders to ensure that we develop solutions that help us move forward together as a province.

A recent piece of legislation, the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011, is a critical part of our tobacco enforcement strategy in Ontario. This legislation provides for stronger controls over all types of raw-leaf tobacco, restructured fine levels for possessing illegal cigarettes, and the authority for police officers to seize illegal cigarettes.

Our enforcement efforts from 2008 to 2011 have been successful. From April 2008 to September 2011, government investigators and inspectors have seized more than 172 million illegal cigarettes, one million untaxed cigars and 48 million grams of fine-cut tobacco. Since May 2006, penalties from violations to the Tobacco Tax Act have totalled over \$21.1 million.

While tobacco enforcement is a priority of our government, there are some who do not agree. Tim Hudak, along with six other PC MPPs, voted against the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. The government intends to take the necessary steps to increase fines on those convicted of selling tobacco to youth and to impose stronger sanctions for repeat offenders of Ontario's tobacco-related laws. The government will work with key partners to further educate the public about health and social problems associated with tobacco and will undertake research to help measure the impact of its tobacco strategies on smoking levels in the province.

Ontario has also committed to doubling enforcement efforts to address the supply of cheap illegal tobacco. As part of this commitment, the government will focus on the implementation of additional regulatory enforcement and other provisions in Bill 186, which was enacted in 2011. Amendments to the Tobacco Tax Act related to raw-leaf tobacco will come into force on October 1, 2012. They will impose stronger controls over all types of raw-leaf tobacco grown in or imported into Ontario. That makes my deputy very happy. He tells me that this particular statute, when it comes into force, will give us still greater powers to seize and eliminate illegal tobacco products.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. Sandals.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Minister, you mentioned in passing earlier that various members of the government frequently meet with mayors from all over the province and city councillors; I know that almost the whole cabinet goes to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario meetings and has a lot of meetings with municipalities. I wonder if you could tell us something about what the government is doing to assist municipalities.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We actually have a very strong record of supporting our municipal partners. This government, in an effort to further support municipalities, developed something called the Ontario municipal partnership fund, or, as it's affectionately known, OMPF. This fund provides \$1.8 billion to municipalities through both the OMPF grants and provincial uploads. The combined benefit has increased the level of funding by three times that of the previous program that was in place under the previous government.

Additionally, the province has increased ongoing support to municipalities by almost three times, from \$1.1 billion in 2003 to \$3.2 billion in 2012. The government also remains committed to the upload of municipal costs, unlike the PCs, who downloaded \$3 billion in costs on to municipal property taxes, raising property taxes, particularly for seniors, right across Ontario. We will continue to honour our commitment regarding the uploads agreed upon with municipalities through the provincial-municipal fiscal and service delivery review in 2008. I had the honour of representing our government along with the now mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, who was at the time the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

In 2012, we continued the phased upload of Ontario Works benefits and began to phase in the upload of court security and prisoner transportation costs. This builds on the previous uploads of the Ontario drug benefit and Ontario disability support costs. In addition, the province has uploaded more than \$170 million in support of municipal Ontario Works administration costs.

What, in effect, happened under the PCs was, they took all of these costs and put it on to the property tax base, which, frankly, wasn't the right tax base. It was more designed to allow them to look like they were balancing the budget when in fact they were shifting the burden and not, frankly, funding things on the proper tax base. It's quite good to see how many municipalities are able to hold the line on tax increases now, while at the same time meeting the needs of their communities. It does put pressure on the provincial budget, there's no question, but we made a very strategic decision that, in spite of the challenges associated with the downturn in 2008-09 and the obvious attendant problems it has put our fiscal situation in, it was important to honour the undertakings we made. Over time, through growth in the economy and a number of other factors—better management and transformation—we would, in fact, be able to continue the uploads. We saw that as important and as part of a better future for Ontario and the sustainability of those public services which are so important to us.

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**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I thank you for mentioning things that people don't necessarily publicly spend a lot of time thinking about. You mentioned court security. Having spent some time at community safety I know that for those municipalities who had a courthouse located in their jurisdiction, it was a huge issue. I think of my municipality, which is the location in Guelph, but for all the courts for all of Wellington county; I think of Owen Sound, which is a much smaller municipality, where it was a huge issue that they were footing the court security bill for the entire county. So I know that this is an issue where the municipalities were delighted to see the uploads starting to flow this year. It's really making a difference for those affected municipalities and their budgets.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Owen Sound, I think, is the real—I remember Bill Murdoch constantly advocating for us to undo the decision that his government had made. We were able to do that, not just for Owen Sound, but it had a particular impact on those mid-size communities that were hosting courthouses. It has eased their burden and, more importantly, eased the burden on the property tax base. Frankly, the property tax base was not designed to support the provision of court services and so on. It was bad public policy that shifted the burden to property taxpayers, and unfortunately, that hits seniors and people in smaller towns disproportionately.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Exactly. Thank you for that.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And your timing was perfect. I'll stop you there. To the members of the loyal opposition.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Minister, that was certainly a slam Duncan, if I might add, as you went after previous Tory governments and decisions that were made, which were probably made in the best interests at that time, based on the conditions at that time.

However, I want to move back to the Mississauga power plant for a moment, sir. I have some questions for you. Were you aware of the announced figure that the Mississauga power plant would cost? When that plant was announced, what was the announced figure at that time?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm sorry; do you mean the cost to build the plant at the time?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, sir. I'm sure that numbers came out, but do you recall what they are?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I probably was, yes. It was subject, as I recall, to a tender. They were successful. There were challenges on implementation in the first couple of years associated with that, that went beyond it, but, yes, I probably would have been.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** And that number would be?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't recall.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You don't recall the number?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If you have it, I'd be happy to hear it again.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Will you provide us with that? I believe I may have asked that question earlier.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd be happy to. I think it's a matter of public record.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. All right. Based on that, though, now being the finance minister, I look at it and I think, okay, so you signed the cheques. I guess the question that I have for you is: How much had the government—your government—invested in the Mississauga power plant up to and including the time when you decided to close that plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have to stress again that that plant, the Lambton generating station, all the various power plants that have been built since we've taken office, are not paid for by tax dollars. They're paid for through the regulated price of energy, which is done by the Ontario Energy Board. So there would not be—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** But somebody has to be put on the hook for that, sir, after—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's the ratepayers; it's not the government. When this company won that particular bid—that was one of a number at that time, as I recall—it would not have had an impact on the fiscal plan because we would not pay the costs out of the tax base. The cost of the power purchase agreement—that's essentially what they wanted; they wanted a power purchase agreement. The Ontario Power Authority agreed to buy the power from them under a certain set of terms. Those costs would be passed on to electricity consumers on their electricity bill, so there would be no cost associated with the acquisition or building of that—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** But somebody has to pay down the road.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, ratepayers.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** And if the government made that decision—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Ratepayers.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. So you're putting that burden on the ratepayers. I guess an additional question—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me just finish; don't put words in my mouth. The government has made the decision to put the relocation costs on to the tax base as opposed to the rate base. When we enter into a contract with a power provider, the costs of that power go to the rate base. Rates are regulated by the Ontario Energy Board and the power purchase agreement price is blended into that, as I understand it.

Again, I want to stress, when that plant was part of an RFP, as I recall, they were one of the successful proponents. They would have entered into a power purchase agreement. The costs of that, whatever the terms of that were, were borne on the energy rate base; that is, they go on to the electricity bill. The government of Ontario would not have written a cheque. The costs are recovered over the life of the agreement. I think most of these are 20 years, Deputy; I can't recall specifically. They come in at different terms, depending on the timing. For instance, the price of natural gas today is much lower than it was at the time this plant was built.



However, for the relocation costs, the government has made the decision that those costs will be borne on the tax base.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** All right. Do you have any idea of the value of what's been left in the ground in Mississauga?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I suppose part of the \$180 million would give us an approximation of that. Let's see: The cost of relocation was \$180 million. The costs include \$85 million for site-specific costs that can't be reused at the new facility: labour, permitting, construction materials; \$7 million for additional site-specific costs that have yet to be charged. So there's \$92 million. The balance, the \$88 million for an early termination payment, brings us to \$180 million. I guess that might serve as an approximation. So, say, roughly \$92 million.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Roughly \$92 million has been left in the ground unrecoverable.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not left in the ground per se, but for labour, permitting, and construction materials; \$7 million for additional site-specific costs. That's an approximation. That's not—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So \$92 million. I see. Again, will the electricity consumers assume any of those costs associated with the cancellation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. We have assumed that on to the tax base.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** On to the tax base.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But in full candour, the rate base is pretty much the same as the tax base. Taxpayers are paying for it; they're ratepayers as well.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** All right. You say that the cost of relocation is \$180 million. Just very quickly, a quick definition of relocation? When you say relocation, what does that mean to you? I'm sure that there's a lot of confusion. Maybe the deputy minister can help us.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm going to refer that to the OPA. But that is the amount that's been agreed to by the proponent—the company—and the Ontario Power Authority. That is appropriately answered by the Minister of Energy and the OPA.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see.

I'm sure that when you put things together, these contracts, there are penalty clauses, escape clauses within the contract. What was the actual penalty that government or taxpayers have had to pay, if we can break that down?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There's an \$88-million payment, the third number I gave you a couple of moments ago, for early termination.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So \$88 million.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If you take \$88 million and \$92 million, that gives you \$180 million.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see.

Who owns the land at Mississauga?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll follow up with the Minister of Energy and the OPA.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The reason being, sir, that if it was the government that owned that land, obviously there's a

cost associated with that as well, which may or may not have been included in that \$180 million. And then, looking ahead, I'm a little bit concerned about the cost of lost opportunity as we move into the Lambton generating station as well, lost opportunity for the cost of that land as well. I'm wondering, has that been taken into consideration?

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Because quite frankly, sir, there is some skepticism relative to the total cost of this cancellation. You constantly say, "The relocation, the relocation," and based on the history or past performance of this government, we feel there may be some hidden costs in there that perhaps have been moved into a different category; we're just moving figures around. I'm just hoping, sir, that you could expand on that a little bit further for us because we do have concerns about property and who—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I will refer that to the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority.

What I can tell you is that this is a material transaction. The Auditor General will look at it as part of his audit of this fiscal year and he will be in a position to comment on it in addition to the information we have provided you with.

Earlier this week we came out with the additional \$10 million. As Mr. Bisson pointed out, I think quite properly, one of the reasons we came out was that the settlement of that particular long-standing legal agreement needed to be reached in order, we felt, to get to a settlement on the bigger question. We have tried to be as transparent as we can.

The other thing I indicated today in questioning from Mr. Bisson: That \$180 million could vary slightly.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I recall that, sir.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We are trying to be as transparent as we can and I believe that, as I say—I shouldn't say "I believe"—the auditor will look at this as part of his routine annual review of our books.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** What was the percentage completion of the project at the time of the cancellation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll refer that to the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** But you would know that, I would think.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I wouldn't. The Minister of Energy's responsible for that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Your ministry should.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** With respect, no.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** There needs to be dialogue in between there.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's why we have a Minister of Energy. I understand he spent a number of hours here answering questions and I'll refer that to him.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Any progress payments made?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We've disclosed all the payments. I'll refer that, again, to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, maybe we have a new Minister of Finance, it would appear, because we're not getting the information, sir, that we need. I respect the fact that you're deferring that but I would also ask that some of those documents be made available to our committee.

So we're not sure of the estimated total cost, the announced cost. We're not sure on that. We're not sure on the percentage completion of the—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, we never said that. With respect, don't put words in my mouth. If you don't know the right minister to ask the question of, I've undertaken to pass those on and you'll get an answer to your question. I will fulfill all of the obligations I have to the Legislature and this committee. So please don't put words in my mouth.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm just summarizing—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, you're not summarizing. That is not what I said. Mr. Chair, I apologize, but I do have to set the record straight. I did not say that and do not put those words in my mouth.

You had the Minister of Energy here for some nine hours or so, at which time you could have put these questions. You may very well have put them, I don't know. I didn't watch all the proceedings because I was out in my constituency. But I will undertake to get you the responses to those questions from the appropriate minister and, as I've undertaken to Mr. Bisson and to the Chair of the committee, myself and my ministry will fulfill all of our obligations to this committee and to the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

If we may, sir, I'd like to talk about the Lambton power plant for a moment. Obviously the land at the Lambton generating station is a valuable asset to the government. Now that you've given it to Greenfield in your sole-sourced, sweetheart relocation deal, as we might add, what's the cost of lost opportunity for that land?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Just so you'll be aware, that plant was closed. It was a coal plant. So it had actually been written off. Again, it's an asset of OPG, which is a crown corporation. But the cost of writing that off would be reflected, again, in the price of electricity. You need to understand how these things work.

There was a coal plant there. The government took a decision to close Ontario's coal-fired generation. We took a writedown on the value of those assets. I'm not sure what year the writedown came in on Lambton. I think we took it, Deputy, in 2005 or 2006; I can't recall.

The assets were impaired. That's an accounting term; we followed all the accounting rules; the Auditor General looked at this. There was no value to that asset on our books. In fact, this puts value back in. I don't know—and you'll have to ask the Minister of Energy—what the arrangement is. Whether that land is being given to Greenfield, if it's leased, I can't answer that. That's appropriately asked of the Minister of Energy. For your purposes—and your party disagrees with our plan to

close coal plants. We wrote off the value of that asset some years ago.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I think we initiated the very first coal plant closure.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, but then you opposed it, and you voted against every appropriation we made to do that over a number of years.

We wrote the value of that off some years ago. I can't recall when. I'll undertake to get you the information as to when we wrote that off. From the government's books, we had already written it off, so in fact this may put more value back into an asset that is owned by OPG. I don't know what the arrangement is between Greenfield and OPG. That would be appropriate for the Minister of Energy to answer and I undertake to pass on your concerns to him.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Your government decided to sole-source the Lambton conversion to Greenfield South. Was there a cost-benefit analysis conducted for that decision?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll refer that to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** He's going to be a busy man.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But Minister, on major decisions like that—doesn't your ministry typically engage in cost-benefit analysis for other major government decisions such as this?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Ministry of Energy does, and the Ontario Power Authority. They're the ones who enter into these agreements, not the Ministry of Finance. I've undertaken to get you the answers from the appropriate minister, who I think spent some nine or nine and a half hours in front of you just last week or the week before. But I'm happy to pass it on.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** In making major policy decisions or major purchases, I would assume that the Ministry of Finance is an engaged partner in such decisions to evaluate proposals, tenders.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If the government is making a purchase, yes, but this is not a purchase by the government; this is entering into a contract with a private sector provider to provide power into the Ontario power grid, which is administered by the Ontario Power Authority. It does not go on to our books. The cost of relocation does; we've disclosed those numbers. We'll continue to do that. I will refer the questions you've asked, which are appropriate and legitimate, to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, Minister, we do know from details and the facts that we have from the past that when the Lambton generating station was built several years ago, the cost of that was about \$440 million; probably the energy minister at that time would have those figures to verify. At that time, too, the Lambton generating station was built to produce 2,000 megawatts of power.

A new gas plant: You're suggesting here—I believe a number that I'd heard was costs of about \$380 million to relocate?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm going to refer that—the \$180 million to relocate. I gave you the breakdown of what those costs were—



**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** To build. To build, sir, and then to produce 300 megawatts?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That would be up to the developer and that would be reflected in the price of electricity. It would not be reflected on the tax base.

What they do is they enter into a power purchase agreement. The Ontario Power Authority agrees to buy the power at a certain rate over the life of the contract. It does not come on to the government's books that way. What did come on to the government's books, as I indicated starting at about 8 o'clock this morning, was the \$180 million to relocate. I broke down for you \$85 million for costs that had gone into the previous site, \$7 million for some further site things and then \$88 million for essentially what is called a termination payment.

I will ask the Minister of Energy to again take you through the details of the power purchase agreement that has been entered into with this particular company on the new site.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, let's talk about—I guess the term I would be looking for—if you were to convert the existing—you say that the Lambton power plant has been kind of put aside. I won't say "mothballed." If you were to convert that, what would be the cost of conversion versus the cost to build? I believe that you're awarding the same company the contract to build in Lambton. Is that correct, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, I'm not a person who can adequately answer that, but to my knowledge, you can't convert a coal plant to a gas plant. The new gas technologies are cleaner than the old ones, certainly cleaner than coal. But I'd have to refer that to the Minister of Energy. My understanding is you can't take a coal plant, other than possibly leaving the walls up, and convert it to a gas plant.

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**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. Well, sir, again, as you can see, I believe that we're just starting to scratch the surface here with regard to actual costs involved with the relocation. There are some serious concerns that there may be some other costs, maybe called by a different name, in a different category. When it's all said and done, when it all washes out, that number, whatever that number will be, will be on the backs of the taxpayers—additional costs. Sir, we find that considerably appalling as well, the fact that it's going to be going on these people, on the backs of all taxpayers as well.

Would you have anything further?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Carry on.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Carry on with that? Okay.

Do you really feel, though, that the government is getting the best value for money by getting Greenfield to build the Lambton power plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We had a contract with them. They had won a competitive process, and came in—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Minister, respectfully—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me finish. You asked a question. They won a competitive process where they came in at the lowest price.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, sir.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That was to locate a plant in Mississauga. The site was selected. The people of Mississauga/Etobicoke, the leader of your party and the leader of the third party all agreed that that was not a good site. We made a campaign undertaking that, if elected, we would move the site. We did that. The party that won the contract had won it on a competitive basis and had the lowest price for gas.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. It's just that you're referring—or deferring, rather—a lot of the questions we have to the energy minister—respectfully. But to me, when there's money associated, when there are finances involved, I would think that there would be some dialogue. Just—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I can't let you ask another question, because you've just run out of time. Think about what you want for the next round.

**Mr. Bisson,** the floor is yours.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How much time do we have in this round?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Twenty minutes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Twenty minutes? My God, that was the fastest 20 minutes I've seen. It felt like half that.

Let me bring you back to the package that we received from the Minister of Energy. Inside that package, there's an appendix to a presentation that was made by the Minister of Energy. It's entitled Southwest GTA Gas Generation Cancellation: Options Presentation to the Premier's Office, September 2010. So it's pretty darned clear that there were conversations happening in government—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:**—prior to the election, about cancelling this.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, I think I agree with you there.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So I'm going to go back and ask—okay, so you've said yes; that's fair. Were you part of any conversations around the cancellation, prior to the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Can you repeat the question?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Were you part of any conversations with the Premier or the cabinet around the cancellation, prior to the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Prior to the election?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was privy to a number of informal conversations, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Were you—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Just for the record, let me indicate again: There were conversations within our caucus; there were conversations between and among ministers. I had meetings with Mayor McCallion; I recall having meetings with the mayor of Oakville; I had meetings with the mayor of Brampton, on all kinds of subjects, and this would have been part of that. But there was no formal cabinet minute. I don't recall seeing those particular notes. They may well have come to a cabinet committee, for instance, that I don't sit on. But they did not come to

cabinet and, to the best of my knowledge, did not generate a cabinet minute.

There was a very clear public debate going on about the appropriateness of this site and which site would be more appropriate. There was a need back in the mid-part of the last decade for additional power in the western GTA. So there was considerable cabinet discussion around all of these issues.

With respect to specifically answering your question, I was not privy, prior to the election, to those documents, but I certainly was part of conversations about this whole issue.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Did you attend any of these briefings that the Premier was at in September?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I did not; not to my knowledge.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay; fair enough. Were you aware of any rumours or discussion in regard to what the cancellation costs would be, back in September 2010, or prior to the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was not. I don't think anybody had an accurate handle on that. In fact, the one thing I can recall for you is that, in any kind of conversations we had, everybody always acknowledged that there would be costs, but nobody knew that we could get to a settlement without going to court. I mean, the public data, others had speculated how much it was—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But that does beckon another question. Your comment now is that nobody knew there could be a settlement, and the Liberal Party made a political announcement during the election. God help us, but anyway—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, as did you. You could not look the people of Ontario in the eye and say you could get a settlement.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, we were very clear in the last election. I'm not going to get into the debate, but we said—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think it's relevant—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, Andrea Horwath was quite clear that we would not comment on the cancellation costs because we didn't have all the information before us. If you remember, the Conservatives that ran—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And you couldn't legitimately do that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me finish the comment. I respect your comments; you need to respect mine. Prior to the election, when the Tories talked about cancelling the Samsung deal, we went out of our way to say we would not cancel those contracts because we thought that would cost Ontario far more money than it was worth. In the context of the Oakville and Mississauga plants, we made similar comments.

But my point is, had you any idea what the cancellation costs would have been ahead of the election? Any range of ideas as far as cost?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I personally did not. Now, whether or not the Ministry of Energy—you had the minister. I've now confirmed he was here for 15 hours two

weeks ago. Whether the Ministry of Energy had documents and discussions with the Premier's office, that's quite possible.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So is it fair to say it would have been a heck of a lot cheaper if we had done this in September 2010?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know the answer to that, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, there would have been less construction—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It could have been more expensive. I don't know. I don't know.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right. So I guess the problem a lot of us are having is that it was a bad decision to start with, and we all agree on that. That's why you cancelled it in the end; that's fine. But the government had been sort of hobbling along as best it could in regard to this whole issue, and I use your quote when you said a little while ago, "We did this when we were down in the polls." So it's pretty clear that the Liberal Party said, "Hey, we've got a problem with a number of ridings around these gas plants, so we need to save them. So let us make an announcement during the election." Either the Liberal Party knew how much it was going to cost in the end and didn't take that too much into consideration other than their political interests, or somebody had been talking to them. Either way, the point is that taxpayers are caught with the bill.

So—and you don't need to respond if you don't want to—it just seems to me that you had plenty of opportunity, leading up to the election, because there were all kinds of discussions, from what we can see inside the emails, between the OPA, the ministry, between the Premier, between various people. You've said yourself the caucus had the discussions—there were informal discussions, probably more formal discussions, on the issue—and decided not to deal with this until it became a political problem. When it was a political problem, you guys acted. Do you think that's responsible to the taxpayer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think the 8,000 new megawatts of electricity we've brought on with \$7 billion in investments that have brought the system back from the brink were very responsible. This particular project proved to be untenable to the people of Mississauga and to the people of Etobicoke. We listened to them. Our campaign made the decision to undertake, should we be re-elected, that we would relocate the plant. We did that. We've now fulfilled that undertaking.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But I guess what—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I know where you're going. I'll sit here and you can lecture me all day.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're doing the lecturing right now, not me.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This is what we've done. Your leader supported it at the time. The leader of the Conservative Party supported it at the time. Yes, governments and politicians and political parties do respond to people. That is part of our job. Sometimes you have to do things



that you don't want to do. Sometimes you have to do things that aren't popular. The HST was not popular; I acknowledge that. It was a very difficult thing to do politically, but you do those things and we all make our choices. So we made a campaign undertaking and upon re-election we then formally began to move to fulfill the undertaking, which we have done over the course of the last number of weeks.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I understand that political parties respond to political issues, but I just want for the record to be clear: Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats never promised to rip up these contracts before and during the last election. We always said that we were opposed to the plan, but you couldn't make that decision without looking at the numbers, because the numbers, quite frankly, may offset the benefits. So it's pretty hard to make that kind of accusation.

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The point that I guess I'm getting at is that essentially, what all of this leads to is that the Liberal Party had a problem in that area and it essentially made a political decision to try to save a number of seats. They said, "Heck, if we don't win, maybe we'll win those seats just on the basis of the promise. And if we do win, well, we'll worry about how we deal with that later," and we, the taxpayers, are caught with it later. I guess my point is that it seems to me a pretty bad way of doing policy. That was just my point.

The other thing is, you had said earlier though—I remember seeing this in the documents, and I wish I had the document handy. You said last fall that the Keele thing was not related to the Mississauga thing. So why is there a change of position?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** At that time, it wasn't. It goes back to 1998—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Last fall I'm talking about.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, I know, but the deal went back to 1998. It happened long before this company won a competitive bidding process.

Once we got into, as I understand it—again, this was handled by the OPA, on the relocation. Why we disclosed the additional \$10 million, once we had a settlement on the other matter, was that it became evident that in order to really deal with the larger relocation and try to attain a settlement there, we in fact had to reach an agreement on the outstanding legal suit. So out of an abundance of caution, we simply said that this settlement came about and it's another \$10 million. It's not part of the relocating cost, but to your question, yes, indirectly, it did have an impact on getting the larger settlement.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just make the point again: You had said last fall that the two were not connected. You're saying today that—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They weren't.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You just said earlier they were. Which is it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Last fall they weren't connected. With respect—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Eastern Power at no time last fall said, "You know what? Nudge, nudge, wink, wink. If you don't settle us on Keele Valley, we're going to have a harder time coming to a decision on Mississauga?" You just said, in fact, that it was part of the enticement to get them to settle Mississauga. But I don't want to waste time on it. It's on the record; that's all I have.

When did we find out the \$180-million figure? When did you guys find out about that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I became aware of it—I'll have to get you the specific date. It would have been within the last three to four weeks, because the negotiations were ongoing.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But I remember seeing an email somewhere—and I wish I had my staff guy to bring it up to me. The \$180 million was talked about in the emails last November—OPA.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, the OPA handled that, and it didn't come to finance until they had concluded a settlement. That would have been speculative at that point because the settlement—when was the settlement reached, Deputy? Do you recall? I'll refer it to the Minister of Energy.

There would have been speculation around it, but from finance's perspective, you don't publish numbers based on speculation.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** This is far from speculation. This is from officials within the OPA who essentially say that at that point the cost was—wow, wow—\$190 million. That's \$180 million plus \$10 million. That's pretty darn exact. If the OPA knew back in November, if they knew this after the election, on November 20, 2011, how come cabinet didn't know and why did you not know as Minister of Finance? That's a bit of a stretch.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's an internal document which I haven't seen. I'll refer to the Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But nobody's telling you, as Minister of Finance, that there's an add-on to your budget of \$190 million?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There wasn't a decision at that point in time, and it wasn't \$190 million; it was \$180 million. The \$10 million came from—I don't have that document, and I will refer—it's an Ontario Power Authority document. I'll refer it to the Minister of Energy. You had him here for 15 hours.

What I will say is what I've said from the beginning. The cost of relocation is \$180 million. We did settle another suit with the same company for \$10 million, which was a separate matter, but once we began to, as I understand it—again, I was not the minister responsible for this. As the negotiations began, it became evident that in order to reach a settlement on the larger piece, we would have to achieve a settlement on that particular piece.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If officials within the government—and I'm not talking about government members here, but people who work for the government, the OPA and others—had the figure of \$190 million back then, which is the \$180 million plus the \$10 million, because this document clearly talks about the Keele Valley settle-

ment along with the Mississauga gas plant settlement—they come up to a total of \$190 million. Bang on to what was announced a couple of weeks ago.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It was speculative at that point because they didn't have the agreement of the company.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Wow, they're clairvoyant.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, it was speculative at that point and may have gone through all kinds of other iterations.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But you understand my point. Wouldn't these guys be talking to somebody?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They were talking. The OPA had the lead on the negotiations on this.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right. So if they came up with \$190 million back then it would probably mean to say they've had some kind of conversation with Eastern Power to come up to that number, right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would defer that. I don't know what conversations were held between the OPA and Eastern Power.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But is it fair to assume—and I don't know the answer to this and maybe you don't. But if they came up to the exact number of what it would cost to settle this on November 20, is it fair to think that they've had some kind of conversation with Eastern Power to come up to that number?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know the answer to that. I don't know. I will ask the Minister of Energy to respond to your questions about what conversations occurred between and among the company, the OPA, the Ministry of Energy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I would hope that there was some discussion between the government, the cabinet—in other words, when I talk about the government, I mean the cabinet—and cabinet ministers in regard to the OPA. They were bang on the number back in November and we only find out about that now, so you can understand why we're a little bit—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There were conversations subsequent to the election at the cabinet table, yes. There was not—as I understand it, in my recollection of events, a settlement reached, and that the negotiations—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Was there any of this—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me finish now.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. Fair enough.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The negotiations were ongoing until relatively recently. I'll double-check with the ministry as to when they actually got a settlement. Once the settlement was reached, then, in turn, the government looked at the cost of that settlement, whether it was reasonable in the circumstances in terms of what we wanted to achieve. The government then had to make a decision with respect to ratifying the settlement that had been reached and then make a decision with respect to how it would be paid for. That, Gilles, to the best of my ability, is how things unfolded.

With respect to what estimates were provided by the power authority to others and on what basis those were made, I would have to refer those to the Minister of En-

ergy because, again, finance's involvement really didn't come about until minutes of settlement had been achieved.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My point is that we know there were briefings in the Premier's office the fall before the election, because we have the documents that prove that. We know there were other briefings by the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of the Environment to their ministers which essentially talked about what the pros and cons were to cancellation, and I would assume there would have been some cost tied to it. Then we have this email that points to the exact number of the settlement on November 20, 2011. I presume that this information had to have been given to the Minister of Energy, at the very least, probably the Premier, because he's the guy who made the decision, because we know he got the briefing by the ministry. So they knew what the hell the cost was. This decision by the Liberal Party, I guess is what I'm saying, wasn't exactly in isolation to what the government was doing. Is it fair?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There was no settlement at that time.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I realize there was no settlement. Listen. I agree, there was no settlement.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know. I don't know where that number comes from. What I can tell you is that at that point there was no settlement. So from finance's perspective, from an accounting perspective, you can't crystallize a number when there's no settlement. Even if we had heard—and I may well have heard that number by November—that number, we would have said, "Well, we can't crystallize this because that's an estimate right now." Until there is a signed and agreed-to settlement, you cannot crystallize a number.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, we're making progress. So you might have heard—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Subsequent to the election—I've said right from the beginning cabinet was involved in these things.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So now you might have heard that number back in November 2011, is what you just said; earlier you said you just found out three weeks ago.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would have heard a speculative number, and I would have sent it back and said, "Well, that's all good and well, but until we have a settlement"—and I've been very clear that since the election finance has been involved, absolutely. And we would have said, "Until we get a settlement—signed, sealed and delivered—we will not crystallize a number because it's not accurate."

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I understand that. God, if I was—my finance minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But don't put words in my mouth.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm not trying to put words in your mouth.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You are.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No. I'm using your words.



**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You are. Come on, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. Did you say before, yes or no, that you just found out three or four weeks ago what the number was? Isn't that what you said to this committee just about a few minutes ago?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I said was—yes, because there was no number.

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**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. Then—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That is speculation. I don't know who wrote it. You said Colin Andersen. I don't know. Here's what I know, Gilles—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Then—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Gilles, let me finish, because you're putting words in my mouth again. And you know what? This is—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I think you're putting your own words in.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You are putting words in my mouth.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I think you're the one putting the words out there.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I'm sitting here, answering questions as best I can, trying to be as transparent as I can, and what I've told you is don't twist my words. What I've said is, after the election, yes, we were very clearly involved. I would have to check on the whole way this thing unfolded, what happened at cabinet versus cabinet committee. What I can tell you is that finance would not crystallize a number until there's a settlement.

The \$190 million in that November 21 memo, I have no idea where it came from. If they came to us and said that, we would have said, "Well, that's all good and well, but bring me minutes of settlement."

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, but you understand the point that I'm making here, which is—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Actually, I don't. I think you're twisting my words.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, let me explain it, then tell me if you disagree. You said to this committee not too long ago that you found out about this \$180 million plus \$10 million number for a total of \$190 million about three weeks ago, whatever it is. I read this email to you that was written on November 20, 2011, and you said, "I might have very well heard that." So you can understand where I'm coming from.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can't, no. Here's what I said, and let me reiterate: the \$10 million didn't get arrived at until this week. There was no settlement. As finance minister, I am responsible to you and to your constituents to not bandy about numbers in the absence of a minute of settlement.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You just said now that you guys were clearly involved in this discussion by November.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We were involved in the discussion. We had no numbers. We had speculation. I may have heard different numbers. I can tell you, some people in public were saying this was going to cost hundreds of

millions more than it has. So as finance minister, I can't take a position other than—and I would say to my cabinet colleague, whether it's the Minister of Energy or whoever the minister is, my job as finance minister is not to arrive at these settlements. My job as finance minister—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm just going to let him finish his sentence. Don't get another one in.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We're out of time? Okay.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** My job as Minister of Finance is to say, until you have a minute of settlement on these things, all these numbers are pure speculation.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And we'll leave it with that. I'm going to ask that we run just until about 12:32 so that you can get your full 20 minutes in.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Maybe you can forgo your questions and we can go for lunch.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** All right. You have 20 minutes. Ms. Cansfield.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much, Chair. Actually, I want to build on something that we chatted about before, because this is of great interest in my community and my constituency and it's property tax.

Prior to 2003, I remember having a conversation with a Tory cabinet minister who said, "We should have done this ourselves." Nothing happened. Certainly we have done some things. So I guess I'm asking you, what are the things we've put in place to deal with those issues around property tax?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, you're quite right. I think there were seven different bills in the course of a few years on property tax by the previous government that all left the system in a bit of shambles.

Starting with the 2009 tax year, reassessments are being conducted every four years and assessment increases resulting from reassessment are being phased in over a four-year period: a four-year cycle of reassessments, together with a four-year phase-in. This provides greater stability and predictability to property owners and ensures that they will not face sudden property tax changes from year to year. It maintains regular revaluations of property so that similar properties of similar value pay similar taxes, and enables municipalities to continue relying on a stable revenue source to fund important public services. Property owners will no longer face sudden tax changes from year to year. For example, a 20% assessment increase will be phased in gradually in increments of 5% a year over four years.

By and large, this system tried to undo the damage that had been done in the previous years where some people would see assessments skyrocket literally overnight. It's a very difficult process—I think we all acknowledge that—first of all, keeping assessments up to date and consistent across the province, and then allowing people time to adequately have the opportunity to adjust to assessment changes.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thanks, Minister. I could share with you, and I'm sure others could, that since

we've made those changes, the calls to my office have gone down exponentially. It's just incredible what a difference this made.

The other things that we have done involving modest-income—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Sorry?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Modest- or low-income folks that are homeowners and also for seniors, some of those programs: Can you give us an idea of what some of those are?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Sure. For seniors and low- or modest-income homeowners, there are a number of tax relief mechanisms available through the property tax system and the personal tax system.

Through the property tax system, municipalities are required to provide relief from reassessment-related tax increases to homeowners who are or whose spouses are low-income seniors or low-income disabled persons. The eligibility criteria and the amount of relief are determined by the municipality. In addition, local municipalities have the option of providing property tax reductions to residential property owners if the taxes are unduly burdensome. Municipalities determine the eligibility criteria and the amount of relief.

The province also provides relief for the sales tax on energy and for property taxes to low- to moderate-income families and single people, including seniors, through the Ontario energy and property tax credit. This program will deliver about \$1.3 billion in relief for the sales tax on energy and for property taxes to about 2.8 million individuals and families annually.

As well, the Ontario senior homeowners property tax grant provides up to \$500 each year to help low- to moderate-income senior homeowners stay in their homes. Over five years, this grant will provide approximately \$1 billion in property tax relief to more than 600,000 seniors.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Wonderful; thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Dhillon.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Minister, the 2012 federal budget announced that the age for eligibility for old age security would increase from 65 to 67. Can you tell us the implications for Ontario with these changes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The federal government has indicated that this proposed change will gradually increase the entitlement ages of the OAS system by two years, beginning in 2023 and fully implemented by 2029. This will have wide-ranging implications for Ontario seniors, social and health services and the retirement income system and create additional financial pressures for Ontario and municipal programs that support low-income adults. The federal government has indicated that provinces will be compensated for additional costs borne by this change. We will bring up this issue in forthcoming discussions.

It's estimated that the proposed change will likely increase provincial social assistance expenditures by

about \$300 million to \$330 million—I think those are current dollars—when fully implemented in 2029.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you, Minister.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. MacCharles.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** As we enter our, I believe, fifth hour now, I think it's important that we continue to ask a range of topics, notwithstanding that as soon as we stop talking about the gas plant, all members opposite save for one are out of the room. So I'm pleased to continue discussion on some other important elements—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I really must admonish you. You're not allowed to say that. You cannot talk about a member's attendance or absence, even in committee.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Chair. I'm just very pleased to be able to move on to other topics, is what I want to say.

Something that I think there's still a bit of confusion about is: What is going on in health care in terms of what we're spending and what we're not spending? I think the minister has clarified that. I think what would be really helpful is to hear a bit more about the Ontario action plan for health care. Minister, you alluded to that earlier in terms of what Minister Matthews is talking about, but I think it would be very helpful to talk specifically about that and I think it's an opportunity to dispel some of the myths out there about what that action plan is saying. We're all hearing some of the myths and, I'd like to think, some facts too about what's in the action plan. I get a lot of calls in my office about it, as I'm sure other members do, so I think it would be just great for all members here today to talk about what that plan is about and perhaps what it's not about.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Thank you, Tracy. I'd be delighted to. Our colleague Minister Deb Matthews, in my view, has done just an amazing job on a very difficult file. I want to just reiterate the sorts of initiatives she has taken and that we have provided the resource to, through the budget, to allow her to undertake these.

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Our government is committed to increased access to quality health care for all Ontarians. We will build on Ontario's action plan for health care to create a sustainable and high-quality health care system in the following ways: first, transforming health care, as I indicated earlier, to reduce the rate of growth of spending to an average of 2.1% annually over the next three years. We'll do it also by enhancing community-based care to treat patients in alternative settings such as non-profit clinics and at home instead of hospitals. I had the opportunity, with Minister Matthews, in my own riding to visit a man in his home who has been incapacitated for a number of years. He has been able, with the home supports that we offer, to stay in his home, live a very good quality of life with his wife, his children and his grandchildren outside of an institution, outside of complex continuing care or long-term care. He at the time indicated to us that the reason he was able to do that was because of the home



services that are offered and which have been increased rather substantially by this government.

We're moving to patient-centred funding models to improve the value and quality of care. It's interesting. Right now, everything is centred around the hospital, the doctor, the long-term-care facility. It's not centred around the patient. As individuals, as people, our needs are different. If you look at a chart of when health dollars are spent on us throughout our lives, you see a high number at birth, it tends to taper off, and then as you get older it obviously goes up. We want to make sure that with the money we're spending, the priority is the patient and not the institution.

That's a dramatic transformation that has been looked at widely, and governments and health providers everywhere are moving to this model. It involves a lot of dialogue, I think. It involves a change in how we approach things. But Tracy, you and I are old enough to remember when health care was delivered very differently. When you went to the hospital, if you had surgery, you might be there for two weeks, in some instances. Now you can have major surgery and be home within a few hours.

These kinds of changes, as well as the \$17.9-billion increase in funding since 2003, have given us the shortest wait times in Canada, more than 3,400 new doctors practising in the province, and today, more than 2.1 million more Ontarians have a family doctor. This is very different than the PCs, who left one million Ontarians without access to a family doctor.

Mr. Hudak and the PCs have fought against every investment that has been made in health care. Our government is continuing to increase these investments in home care and community services by \$526 million over the next three years. This will help that transformation. It will generate savings over that period of time because we're delivering services in a more effective, efficient and, in my view, a more sensitive fashion that allows people to stay in their homes longer.

Due to our continued investment in health service delivery in Ontario, there are now more than 12,600 new nursing positions. When in government, the PCs fired 6,000 nurses, comparing them to out-of-style hula hoops.

This transformation is important for us to continue to keep surgical wait times down, to provide the best possible care in the best place at the right time to all Ontarians. That I think Minister Matthews deserves enormous credit for. She's taken a number of very difficult choices resultant from the need to make the fiscal plan targets, which we are making. I'm confident that Ontarians will have a better system that delivers better-quality care to all Ontarians.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Minister. I think the information you're providing certainly helps dispel some of the myths and facts out there, especially around the so-called doctor shortage. I get very worried—and I heard about it earlier this morning—when statements are made like that when in fact there are some other challenges, like getting residency placements for doctors. There's more factual things. I thank you for clarifying

that. That health care comes in a lot of different forms, and the whole agenda of the right care, the right place, the right time I think speaks to that. I just want to say thank you for providing such an in-depth answer.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. Sandals.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** One of the concerns that we often hear talked about in the health care system is that historically, the health care system has focused on treatment of acute disease once it occurs. Obviously, with the elderly, we're looking at longer-term, chronic care.

One of the places where we've traditionally been weaker is looking at prevention as a strategy. As we've talked about before this morning, we need to be able to transform the system, we need to be able to manage costs, and part of that is moving more resources into prevention so we can decrease the number of resources required to address disease.

I wonder if you could give us some indication of some of the preventative care initiatives that we're taking to actually reduce the occurrence of certain illnesses.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To reduce future costs associated with preventable illnesses, initiatives are needed to help Ontarians stay healthy and productive. For example, obesity has a direct effect on the development of type 2 diabetes, and diabetes costs the Ontario economy about \$4.9 billion per year—excuse me; that costs the Ontario government about \$4.9 billion a year. It's probably a much higher figure when you look at the economic impact of those costs. Currently, approximately one in five youth in Ontario are overweight.

In addition, tobacco continues to be the leading cause of preventable disease and premature death in Ontario, accounting for \$1.9 billion in health care costs and approximately 13,000 deaths per year.

The government is committed to promoting healthy living and supporting better management of chronic conditions by setting up a panel of advocates, health care leaders, non-profit organizations and industry partners to develop a childhood obesity strategy that will reduce childhood obesity by 20% over five years.

The 2012 Ontario budget includes action to increase fines for those who sell tobacco to children—I spoke about this earlier—and double enforcement efforts to address the supply of cheap illegal tobacco in Ontario.

We are providing all Ontarians with access to an on-line personal cancer risk profile that will use medical and family history to measure cancer risk and then link those at a higher risk to prevention supports, screening or genetic testing, and are continuing to expand comprehensive screening programs for cervical, breast and colorectal cancer. Participants will be notified and reminded when they are due for their next screening.

There are all of these initiatives going on. I'm confident that our government is moving ahead and at the front of the curve, in terms of transformation to a prevention orientation in terms of health care, to help manage costs down the road.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** And it's interesting, when we look at the childhood obesity strategy, that that builds on the

work that has already happened at the Ministry of Education.

In our previous mandate, there was a focus there, first of all, on getting daily physical activity into the schools. Then we began to look more at the nutrition piece, first of all, with getting rid of junk food in vending machines, but then moving on to nutritional guidelines and making sure that vending machines had healthy foods, and getting into the whole area of, when food is actually sold in schools, making sure that it's nutritional food that is an appropriate, healthy food that is being sold.

Certainly, childhood obesity is a huge issue, and there's a lot more to do. Even the tax credit for kids' activities that you introduced, Minister, in our last term—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Oh, the activity tax credit.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** —that helped too. It was interesting: My daughter was looking at something she was signing up my six-year-old grandson for and said, "This doesn't say"—she's involved with the organization. She said, "This doesn't say anything here about the fact that it's eligible for the tax credit for childhood participation in activities." We've got to make sure that this year we get the logo on there that says that if you sign up for this program, Mom and Dad are eligible for a tax credit. But it all links back to the kids getting more physical activity.

So there's a whole bunch of activities here—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And don't forget that we restored gym classes across Ontario. That was seen to be not a priority in earlier days.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Absolutely. Absolutely. It's interesting: I had a gentleman in my office just last week who wanted to come in and talk about childhood obesity and what initiatives we were taking, and it was very much related to physical activity in school and out of school. So thank you for updating us on the next step with the childhood obesity strategy.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. Cansfield.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you. I wanted to ask you this, Minister. You spoke in your opportunity to have a little bit of an opening statement around the issue of the changes to the drug benefit plan. You spoke about it in terms of the more affluent seniors, but it's a broader plan than that. I think we would all benefit from having a more insightful and full description of what exactly we're doing.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Sure. As you know, Donna, the Ontario Drug Benefit program provides assistance to seniors for the cost of their prescription drugs. The ODB is a critical element of the health care services and supports that Ontario provides to seniors.

Since 2006, the government has made reforms to the Ontario drug system to improve the value for money that Ontarians pay for prescription drugs. These changes include reducing the prices of most generic drugs to 25% of the comparable brandname products. The government's reforms are saving seniors money on their prescriptions.

By 2011-12, the savings in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care drug programs were about \$500 million

per year. An additional \$100 million in savings was achieved in 2011-12.

The government is taking steps to ensure the ODB program is effective, properly administered and providing the most help to those in the greatest need. The fairness of the program will be improved by asking the highest-income seniors to pay more of their own prescription drug costs while ensuring that these costs do not impose an unreasonable burden. About 5% of senior ODB recipients will be paying more under this change.

I should tell you—I'm sure you heard this too—I'd meet very affluent Ontarians through my work. They are oftentimes business leaders and that, and they say to me, "Why in goodness' sake are you paying for my drugs?" That led to the creation of this program.

The key, however, is to ensure that those of more modest means don't get caught or side-swiped. So, in effect, we're making the program like our income tax system. Ontario's income tax system, by the way, is the most progressive income tax system in the country. It was before this last budget; it continues to be.

As a result, under the current ODB program, seniors will pay the first \$100 of their drug costs each year and a copayment of \$6.11 for each prescription after the \$100 deductible amount. The \$100 deductible is waived for lower-income seniors but they are required to pay an existing \$2 copayment for each prescription. I can tell you, in some of the neighbourhoods in my neck of the woods, some of the pharmacists and the pharmacies waive that \$2 fee or cover, which I think speaks volumes about that profession and the people in it.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to have to stop you there, because we've now run out of time, the 20 minutes.

We are now recessed until 1 o'clock. There is lunch available for members of the committee and staff in committee room 1. We'll see you back here at 1 o'clock.

*The committee recessed from 1232 to 1305.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We will call the meeting to order and we'll get right into it. The rotation is now with the Conservatives.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay, I'll press my start button here. Well, welcome back, folks. I'd like to address my first few questions over to the deputy, give the minister a bit of a break after lunch.

Deputy, in the last fiscal year, how much would you say your department has spent on external consultants, in your estimation?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** I know we track that information. I don't have that readily available, but that's something that we would be able to get back to you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Oh, great. Would your department be able to table that to the committee within the near future or the next 30 days, even?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** As part of our response to working with legislative research and the Chair, we'll be responding as part of our general response to other requirements.



**Mr. Michael Harris:** Would you be able to break that down, also, by unit in your ministry, including the minister's office, any and all invoices and contracts for external consultants in the last two fiscal years and notes as to why those consultants were retained?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** That would be a broader undertaking, so that would add a bit more time. We would commit to following up on that and seeing what level of detail is available, but that's something we will report back to you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Could we say within 30 days?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** In terms of how quickly we can do it, I'll have to get back to you. But that's something that we will endeavour to follow up on.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Would you also be able to table with the clerk the ministerial transition binder you prepared for the minister immediately following the election?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** I wasn't Deputy Minister of Finance at that time. I assumed the post in December. So I'll have to follow up what materials were prepared for the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay. We would appreciate it. It's just a simple photocopy. If we could have that, if not by tomorrow, a week from today, even.

Over to the minister: In the last two fiscal years, how much has your office, would you say, in your estimate, spent on travel and expenses per se?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm going to have to get back on the specific amount. We implemented some changes to travel budgets which were designed to save some money. I'll undertake to get back to you with the full amounts. That's been published.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** What would have been your office's total budget per year over the last three or four years?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll have to get back to you with the specifics on that. I can probably get that later today—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Today?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I believe it's gone down.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. If you could table that with us, that would be great, including all records, invoices, receipts for all ministerial—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think you guys routinely FOI those. I think you've got most of the ones, and of course, they're also approved by the Integrity Commissioner, as I recall.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** As per standing order 110(b), it would be appropriate for this committee, for them to be tabled here.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll re-table them. That will cost some money since we've already given them to you, but heck, we'll do that.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Why don't you just share what you've got with us?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Would you also be able to table, to the clerk, your House book?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll fulfill whatever obligations I'm required to.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** This committee would appreciate that request of fulfilling, to the clerk, the House book.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think you've gotten most of that through FOI so, again, we'll repeat it; we'll spend staff time on that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Would you also, to this committee, table any emails, correspondence and briefing notes from within your office, and also ministry, as to the projected costs related to the deal you agreed to with the NDP prior to the budget?

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**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Do I have to give you approval for that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have no idea. We'll fulfill our obligations both to the committee and to the Legislature.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. We'll make that noted, obviously.

Back to the power plants: I think there are still a lot of unanswered questions pertaining to the \$190 million that taxpayers will now be on the hook for, in addition to probably three times that or even more for the Oakville plant. You talked about the fact that there was a lot of political—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm sorry, did you say that you know the price of the Oakville—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I do not, but if you do, we'd be happy to—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Just for the record, I want the record to show that you said that the settlement of that will exceed \$500 million. You said three times more than what we did for this one.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Now you're putting words in my mouth.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, you just said three times. You said at least three times what we just said, and we'll review Hansard.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It could possibly be.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I just want to make sure that I get that on the record because you did say that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, you should check Hansard, Minister, because I said—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You did. You just said three times more than we—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I said it could possibly be, but if you know today, we'd love to hear it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't, that's the problem. I can't do these things until they're crystallized. That was the point I was making earlier. In any event, thank you. It's good to know what your party says the settlement costs will be.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Now you're putting words in my mouth.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, you said it. I didn't say it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Have there been discussions pertaining to the cost of relocation for Oakville? You had mentioned that there were some political discussions—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have not been involved in those. I know you had the Minister of Energy here for 15 hours a week and a half ago. I will relay that question to him.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. So just back to the Mississauga plant, then. You had disclosed earlier to the committee that there was some political discussion pertaining to the relocation of the power plant. In fact, there are a lot of still-unanswered questions in terms of it being a campaign decision or a government decision. Nonetheless, we'll move on from that part of it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Chair, I'd just like to set the record straight. Again, I did not say that. What I said was—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** If you check Hansard, you actually did say "campaign decision"—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —there was a campaign promise made. I also used the words "campaign undertaking," but the decision remained the government's decision subsequent to the election.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** If you check Hansard, you did say "campaign decision," but nonetheless—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Hansard has not been published yet, so you can't say that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, you said it, so—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** In any event, the record will show, so please go on.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It will show. Your colleague, the Minister of Energy, did state that it was a campaign decision, so I'll leave the ramblings between the two of you for another time.

However, it was noted that you said today that there was some polling done that showed things were tight in the Mississauga area and that a decision was made by the campaign team to make the commitment to relocate this plant. Those funds are coming from the contingency area of the budget. I'm not sure if you want to talk about some of the items that have come out of that contingency. We reference a lot of the emergency funding. What sorts of funding will come from the contingency this year that relate to emergencies?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Chair, I do need to first of all say that what I in fact said earlier today was that I was not aware of any polling. I'm just not aware of any polling. That's what I said; Hansard will reflect that.

Again, the rest of your question, I'm sorry?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We wanted to talk about the area of where the \$190 million was coming from and that's coming from the contingency area of your ministry. That's where you've said this \$190 million will be paid out of. Why should emergency monies be used to fix campaign team or Liberal government missteps, misdecisions? Shouldn't this be used to fight fires, help farmers in drought, help citizens in Elliot Lake?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, that's a good example of where it's used as well, but it is routinely used to settle lawsuits that crystallize during a fiscal year. I didn't know this until relatively recently: I guess I'm one of the

most sued guys in the province—I'm named in all kinds—in my capacity as Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Why do you think that is? Is it because—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Because government does business with thousands and thousands of people and businesses. We have a whole department of the Attorney General that has lawyers in every ministry. Part of what they do is deal with lawsuits. Some of them are frivolous; some of them are real.

Contingency doesn't deal just with emergencies, with all due respect. It deals with a whole range of things, including unanticipated things like Elliot Lake. I think the money that—no, actually we were able—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Are you comparing the Mississauga gas power plant relocation to the disaster and the unfortunate loss of life at Elliot Lake?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You're a joke. You're a pitiful joke. I didn't say that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You're the one comparing it—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You know what? You don't even ask questions that have any intelligence. You don't understand how the energy sector works. And don't put words in my mouth. At least Mr. Bisson asks difficult and tough questions that make sense.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We're not friends; I just want you to know, for the record. It's just professional respect.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I know we're not. Oh, yes, we are. We've been getting along well.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, Ontarians have a right to know why a government wasted \$190 million of their hard-earned taxpaying money.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And we've explained it. I explained it.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Where would you have gotten the money?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes. You promised to do it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We wouldn't have built the power plant in the first place.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, but your leader promised to relocate it. Where would you get the money from?

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Order, please. There are many conversations.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, we have, as committee members, a right to know and Ontarians have a right to know why their hard-earned taxpaying dollars are being wasted. Your government made the decision in the first place to build the power plant—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't believe responding to the legitimate concerns of the people of Mississauga and Etobicoke is waste, nor did your leader when he said we did the right thing, nor did the leader of the third party when they supported the decision. We have now revealed what the costs are. We added to that because of another matter, unrelated initially, but because of the overall circumstances, in order to provide transparency.

I believe that we've been responding to the people of Mississauga and Etobicoke. We made the same under-



taking that the other two political parties made in the last election.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, I take offence to the fact you said that I'm a joke. My constituents sent me here to ask the tough questions of you and your government.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Then don't put words in my mouth. With respect, don't, Mr. Harris, put words in my mouth. Keep the debate honest and don't keep putting words in my mouth. Don't quote Hansard that you haven't seen. Don't say I said something I didn't say. This is about integrity. I'm here; I'm happy to answer questions. I'm happy to answer them; I'm delighted. I always enjoy estimates, but you know what? When you put words in my mouth, don't expect me just to sit back.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'll refer to Hansard, then, Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You can't. It's not printed yet, so you're playing games.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I have an electronic copy of it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The good news is, nobody cares about what you're saying at this point on those kinds of things—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, I think that they do. We'll let Ontarians be the judge of that, perhaps.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and they take offence when you put words into my mouth.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I have an electronic copy of Hansard where Mr. Bisson said, "So this was strictly a political decision." You said, "This was a campaign undertaking—" Mr. Bisson said, "This was a political decision." Then you said, "—at a time when I think we were still behind in the polls, so it required a government decision, which occurred after the election." Again: "at a time when I think we were still behind in the polls." That's Hansard. I'm simply referencing what was said earlier and the fact that your government and the campaign team made a decision to squander \$190 million of taxpayers' money to save Liberal seats. Correct?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. So we'll go back to the contingency funding. I'll think we'll let folks decide for themselves. How much would actually be in the contingency fund this year? What is the dollar amount?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Deputy? It's in the budget.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Yes. There's a line item in the budget that would show, through the course of the year, that the government does record amounts drawn from the contingency fund. In every quarterly reporting period, the amount is reported back in terms of, "Here's the amount spent; here's the amount drawn from the fund."

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Earlier today, you said that that contingency fund—there's money that comes in, comes out. How do monies come back into the contingency fund?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As I indicated earlier, under-spending in areas—say, we crystallized something in-year and it would be reported either at the fall statement or at the end of the year through public accounts. But

money does go in and out. We watch the contingency fund because it is designed to meet—for instance, we're now through a little more than a quarter of the year, and the draw on the contingency fund—one thing I mentioned, for instance: We know there are some severe challenges going on in the rural sector right now. We know that it looks right now like there's going to be very substantial crop losses in certain areas.

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So we keep track of where the contingency is. For instance, last year we underspent the contingency, as I recall. We actually had money to put back in because, frankly, we didn't have a lot of unanticipated circumstances. The ones that did occur weren't as costly as they can be in some years. Historically, for instance, in the agricultural sector, we will often have to respond to a horrible crop year through direct spending. I remember in 2005 or 2006, we had to put several hundred million dollars into grains and oilseeds, as I recall. But now, of course, with the risk management program, that risk isn't as high. But we do monitor the contingency fund throughout the year because we're now a little more than a quarter of the way through the year.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Where are we, at a quarter of the way through the year, with the contingency fund as is?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's down to about \$300 million, I think, Deputy?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** We'll report quarterly, so it depends on when, as the minister correctly noted, it gets crystallized. If it's before—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** And that number will include the \$190 million for the Mississauga relocation?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** If the time crystallized—depending on what quarter. So it may not be the first quarter; it could be the second quarter. It's the timing of when these costs are crystallized.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You're saying there's only the \$300 million left, but that does not include the \$190 million?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** No, I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is that the drawdown on the contingency fund happens when the cost is crystallized. It depends on when these costs are reported or crystallized for our financial statements, and then in the next quarter, when the government publishes our quarterly reports, the amount is then shown in that report.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Just to be clear, what do we have left, or what is it drawn down to as of right now or as of last—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, technically at this moment, I think it's still pretty much full, other than a couple of small commitments.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Again, what we'll be reporting on in the next little while is the amount for the first quarter. It will be dependent on when these costs are incurred, and then as these costs crystallize, in the subsequent report—and we'll need to get back to you on the exact amount because it gets reported through each quarter.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So Q1 isn't out yet, then.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** That's correct.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** When do you expect the \$190 million to crystallize?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** Because the transaction occurred this week, it would be in the second quarter.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Second quarter. Okay, Q2. Roughly, though, in your estimate, by the end of Q1, what will we have drawn that contingency fund down to?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** We'll have to get back to you. That's part of the reporting. We either give it to you when the quarterly report is out, or we'll get back to you as soon—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You don't have any rough idea? I think you had mentioned it may be around \$300 million.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That was for the second quarter, really. But again, I'm reluctant to give you a specific answer on Q1 in case the number comes—because we haven't finished the Q1 reporting. I don't want to give you an inaccurate number right now.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Just to be safe, though, take the \$300 million number, deduct the \$190 million. We just finished Q1; we've got three more quarters to go. What happens when such disasters like drought and others occur? What's the plan when we draw it all? Will we not be able to have the necessary money to support those folks?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We also have reserve. We also have, throughout the course of the year, under-spends.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Or you create an under-spend.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, that's true. We could say—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Will you be introducing a new tax to cover—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Ministries can reallocate. For instance, throughout the year, ministries will reallocate. A ministry will say, "On this program, we have spent \$40 million less than we thought. We'll reallocate it to this." There is a contingency over and above the specific contingency line. There is prudence built into the budget throughout.

The specific contingency amounts in the reserve are explicit, but again, throughout the year—and that's why I'm reluctant to give you a number short of what is reported quarterly, because that number will vary. Throughout the course of a year, if a situation develops, whether it's a drought or any kind of unanticipated circumstance, a lawsuit that we lose, any number of things, we can reallocate both within ministries, across ministries, through the contingency fund, and that's why you build contingency in.

You'll recall Mr. Drummond talked about the level of contingency in the budget and whether it's adequate—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I just want to close now, because I know I've got 30 seconds.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop you right there. I don't know how much. You're right, 30 seconds.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm double-checking here just in case. I think it's important to add that taxpayers are fine with some of their money being set aside for people in need and natural disasters such as farmers with their crops. But something tells me that they don't feel comfortable or find this situation worthy of those same funds in terms of relocating that gas plant. I hope that the crystallization of the Oakville plant doesn't happen in the next three quarters.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** There's no opportunity to answer that.

**Mr. Bisson.**

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** For the record, we actually do get along.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, we do, on a personal level. Our differences are political.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We're not personal friends. We're not great friends. I just thought that whole exchange was interesting.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Although this year they've been pretty calm.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, we get along. I think all members here—all BS aside, all of us have our political views and we also have what our political ideology is, but at the end of the day we're all honourable members and we try to do the job the best we can.

I want to switch tracks. I want to talk about ONTC a bit and I want to ask you a couple of questions to that end. How involved have you been, other than announcing in the budget—actually, you didn't announce it. It was Mr. Bartolucci who announced it. You just read in the budget that Mr. Bartolucci had announced it. To what degree are you involved or were you involved in the decision leading up to the decision to divest the ONTC?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** On that particular issue, I have been involved. This issue, particularly in my capacity as Chair of Management Board, goes back to 2003. We have injected, I think, some \$473 million since 2003 across a variety of attempts by the board over the years to—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I give you credit for that, and let me just put on the record that those investments were needed and we give you credit for that. That's not my question.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But to answer your question, I've been involved kind of intimately in my capacity as Chair of Management Board from the beginning.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To give a little fuller flavour, given the fiscal constraints we have, we actually begin the budget process in the fall of the year previously through something called a results-based planning process where with every ministry we basically say, "This is the dollar envelope you have to live within. We need you to come back with the plan to show us how you're going to meet that."



The results-based plan is managed by the treasury board. Liz Sandals is on it. Donna Cansfield is on it now; she was not on it last year. I've been involved with it not just this fiscal year but over my tenure as Chair of Management Board.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Whose suggestion was it to divest? Did it come from the ministry or your ministry? Did it come from northern development or did it come from your ministry?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think it was a meeting of the minds, Gilles, to be candid. There's toing and froing on these things and the ministry has some challenges. Finance will often work with officials at the political level. You discuss these things with your colleagues as well. It would have come from all of us together. I can't say one person stood up and said, "Let's do this."

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So when was the decision made to divest?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It would have been made in the budget process.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Not prior to the election.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, definitely not. In fact, in the last fiscal year, we put more money in and the RBP process started subsequent to the election.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. I talked a little bit earlier in regard to the freight part of the rail business. Everything from Moosonee south and everything from Constance Lake south: There's a fair amount of freight that is shipped from industry and into the community of Moosonee, obviously, because it's the only way in.

The question is, do you envision that after divestment, there actually will be a freight service on rail south of Cochrane?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm going to refer that to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines for a more detailed answer, but yes, we believe that services will continue and, in our view, with better governance, better management, will actually improve.

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**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you think that there will be a freight service once this divestment is done?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And who would deliver that, a private sector entity or—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, I don't want to prejudge what will happen as part of the whole process to divestment, but on that particular issue, we'll see where it lands.

What we do know is that the amount of subsidy, which is \$100 million per year, is not sustainable, not when the occupancy of the passenger service is 17%. There are aspects of the business which are quite viable—Ontario, I think, is a good example of that—which I believe will be better run, better administered, in another fashion. What the effect of it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Is there a—sorry.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Just to complete my answer: What that looks like at the end of the day? At this point, I don't know.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Is it a possibility that some form of ONR will continue to run the freight service, if nobody buys it? In other words, is the government—if no private sector investment comes forward—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can't speculate on that because, again, this is subject to—I know that there's active interest from a number of potential investors in various aspects of this business, so it would be premature to speculate on that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So there are private sector investors who are prepared to buy the freight service, rail freight?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I said that private sector interest has been expressed; the formal process has not, to my knowledge, begun.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, I understand. You're not into the RFP process. I understand that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But there has been interest expressed.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So let me ask you this question: Are you confident that there will be rail freight service after divestment?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I believe that the services that northern Ontarians need will be met and will be met in a more efficient—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That wasn't my question. Sorry, Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, I'm not in a position to speculate. I can't speculate on that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Is it possible there will be no rail freight service? Is that a possibility?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't want to speculate on that, Gilles. I'm confident that the divestment will result in better service across the freight and passenger.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If you have been contacted by some private sector interest in the rail freight—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have not been contacted.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, the ministry.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The ministry—I know there have been expressions of interest brought forward to the government from a number of potential people who are interested in exploring the opportunity.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Are you prepared to share who those people are?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm not even aware of who they are at this point.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Could you request that and provide it to this committee?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I could. I'm not sure that the ministry would be in a position to release those names at this point.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** God, it's a public railway. You would hope—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are commercial interests involved and there will be—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Not to be combative, but the last time we went through this, we knew who the players were.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And at the appropriate time, when the processes are in place, they will be full, open, and there would likely be some kind of oversight by a fairness commissioner or what have you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So what we know so far, from what you've said, is there's interest in the private sector of engaging in discussion around rail freight. We don't know how secure that is, as far as a final decision if somebody wanted to come in. But let's speculate that somebody is interested in actually taking it over. Do you believe that that can be run without a subsidy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We believe that it can be run by the private sector, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Without a subsidy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Wow. Because even Mike Harris, when he went through this 10 years ago, came to the conclusion that CN said, "We can't do this unless you give us a subsidy." What's different from 10 years ago?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, we'll have the Minister of Northern Development and Mines respond to you, but—I'll tell you what's different: We're putting a heck of a lot more money in, volumes are down, it's not well-run, and that's in spite of an investment of more than \$430 million of additional funding. It's just not sustainable. I think in fairness to the north, we have to come to terms with this, and we'll see what the process yields and where this gets us.

What I can tell you, Gilles, in my view and in the view of the government, this is actually a decision that will ultimately improve freight service in the north, will improve ground transportation through different modes of transit, and ultimately will wind up being more efficient and effective.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** In our renewed friendship, I'm asking 10-second questions. I appreciate you've got to give some detail, but please, don't try to do long answers on my 10-second questions.

My question, just to be clear: Do you believe that, if you are able to find a private sector entity, they can run this without a subsidy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll answer it again: I don't want to speculate on that. My view is that we can provide better service—and also, remember, this year alone we have spent some \$551 million on northern highways—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, I'm fine with that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:**—including the continued expansion work—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We've got ambulances in northern Ontario, we've got hospitals, we've got schools—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But you can't take these things out of the context of the broader investments.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, I've got 20 minutes and I'm trying to ask you questions on one section of our expenditures. All I'm asking is—let me ask it a different way. Is it possible that in fact you will have to provide a subsidy to a private sector—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, I don't want to speculate on that until I see what actually comes back.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My sense is, you're going to have to, and just let me make this one-minute comment. There's not a rail service anywhere in the world that, quite frankly, can stand on its own without a subsidy, because it is a very expensive business. But why do we do it? For all kinds of reasons, which I'm not going to get into: environmental, intermodal, and all of that stuff.

But the point is, if you're going to have to provide a subsidy to the private sector, I would assume that just the rail part of the Constance Lake line going down to Cochrane and from Cochrane going down to North Bay is going to cost at least \$5 million, \$10 million, with the subsidy. So if the province is going to be stuck giving a subsidy to the private sector, why would we get out of this business in the first place and not try to figure out how we can find ways to make the ONTC run in a way that's more in keeping with what we all want?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't have any experience running a railway—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's pretty clear.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:**—so I'm not going to speculate on that. What I do know is, who'd have thought you could fly from Toronto to Timmins for 179 bucks?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank God for Porter.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And we're subsidizing the train \$400-and-some per ticket.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But let me tell you what will happen once we become a monopoly, because we had that in Timmins as well. When Air Ontario was alone and there was no competition with Porter, we were paying 2,200 bucks. My point is, there is a competition going on, a very healthy competition, between two services—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not with the railway—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My point is—that's exactly the point.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:**—because nobody's taking the railway.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I don't interrupt you. Don't interrupt me, Minister. We're friends now; remember that.

So the point is that there's a competition between Porter and Air Ontario that's causing both of them to compete with each other and, quite frankly, to have loss leaders. They are dropping their flights in some cases, where they are not making money, trying to get a larger market share. We understand the principles of competition.

What you're going to end up with at the end of this is, if a private sector investor picks up the freight service—and we're just talking freight for Constance Lake south and Cochrane south—there's not going to be any competition, so there's going to be one person paying the bill: the client. Either the rates have got to go up to pay for the ongoing maintenance of that rail system and the operation of it, or there's going to have to be a subsidy put forward.

My thinking is, rail services, like roads, take money to fix bridges and fix ties and railbeds and all that kind of stuff. The amount of business may be a little bit lacking



when it comes to offsetting it. So let's agree that there's probably going to need to be some form of subsidy of that system.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I won't speculate on that until the process is done and until we actually see it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right, fair enough.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —because, again, I don't run railways.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, well, let's talk about a separate railway. The government has decided it's not going to divest the route north of Cochrane that goes up to Moosonee, which is the Little Bear and the Polar Bear. Do you expect to provide it with a subsidy, once you privatize?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How much is that subsidy, in your mind?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll refer that to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I don't know what that subsidy is right now.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Does the deputy have a sense? You seem to.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** No.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We'll have to get back to you.

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** No, I think that would be a question for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can you provide that to us?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I will ask them to, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. So, again, it's going to take a bit of a subsidy in order to—for the record, it's going to take a subsidy to run the rail service from Cochrane north up to Moosonee.

The other question is the equipment that is run on the Polar Bear and Little Bear. Have you seen what that equipment is lately? You don't run a railway, but are you aware of the condition of the equipment, like the cars that run from Cochrane going up to Moosonee?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm told they're not in very good shape—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's right. Are there any plans to upgrade?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and that's why northerners don't like to—again, I'll refer that to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They don't have a lot of choice, going to Moosonee. It's an \$800 airplane ride or the train.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I understand that—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Or snowshoes.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and that's why we're keeping the service.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, very good.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's the only mode of transport.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm glad we're in sync in one part of northern Ontario.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So we're in sync on that, and we are in sync that, for some reason, in spite of some 400-million-odd dollars over the last eight years, those trains are in a deplorable situation—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, we're going to get to that part later. We're going to get to that later.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Gilles, we're friends again. Let me respond in total. Let's be buddies.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Aw, Dwight.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Come on.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Come on, buddy. What are you doing?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Listen, we've had this wonderful exchange all morning.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, Lord. We're going to get to that later. I'm going to blow sunshine your way in a minute, okay?

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I said in a minute. I didn't think—you guys have bad minds. That's all I've got to say about all of you Liberals.

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My point is, there's going to be a subsidy that's going to have to be provided for the train going north. I'd like to have from you, if you could provide the committee, how much you expect the annual subsidy is. I would imagine you're going to have to spend capital as well when it comes to maintaining the rail line from Cochrane going north. You'll have to provide some of those dollars; right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, Gilles—yes. We've agreed to keep that service because of the nature of it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you're going to have to do some capital; right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** At this point, I'm not going to speculate. I'm going to leave that to the people who are helping us work through this.

What I can say is that we believe that the overall impact of this policy will be to in fact improve service to the north. It will be to run a more efficient railway and it will deal with some long-standing issues that government after government have attempted to do.

I will remind you, if I can, that during her visit last week to the north, your leader admitted that she was not willing to go to an election over this. We were reminded as well that when you were part of a government you cut subsidies by \$5 million, you closed the trucking business, you reduced bus service, reduced passenger train service and eliminated plane service.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, we didn't eliminate plane service. It wasn't us.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** NorOntario.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It wasn't us.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, it was.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, it wasn't.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In any event, all I'm saying—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order. Whoa. Mike Harris stopped the planes. Let's be really clear about that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The long and the short of it is—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, Minister, you can't put on the record things that are not factual.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** All right. I'll have that fact checked. This comes from comments that—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Bartolucci makes all kinds of comments and he's hyper-partisan—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** My experience is he's pretty accurate—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —and I understand it. He's a pretty partisan guy; that's fine. But, Minister, I'm asking you questions and I don't want to get into a political discussion.

My question to you was, you're going to have to provide a subsidy for the operation of the rail north of Cochrane and, yes, you're going to have to provide ongoing capital to maintain the rail system and the bridges north of Cochrane; right?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And you're going to have to provide money in order to upgrade the equipment as well.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. Now, the other part—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Over time. I didn't say when, I didn't say how.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, you're not going to do it in one year.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm going to leave that to the people who are going to operate the business—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, you're not going to fund it all in year one. I understand that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm sorry, pardon me?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're not going to fund it in year one, I get that. But my point is—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think one of the advantages, by the way, Gilles, to bringing the private sector in is they have capital, they have more capital than—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can I tell you what happened when they brought the private sector in to run what used to be NorOntario? We used to have 30 communities that had air service in northeastern and northwestern Ontario. We've lost about two thirds of that. Places like Earleton, Kirkland Lake—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Polar Bear goes up there, I think—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and a number of other options.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My point is, the private sector—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** All we're looking to do is improve service—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, what the private sector does well is where you've got a market. Part of the problem in northern Ontario is the market is pretty thin and that's why the government got involved in this business. But let's get back to our questions—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In those areas where the private sector won't serve, we are in fact—the Polar Bear Express is an area that we're going to stay with.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay, you're going to subsidize it, I understand.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We're continuing to invest in roads. Why, for instance, we would continue to put the kind of money—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister. Dwight.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —into what is an inefficiently run service is beyond me—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Dwight, come on, buddy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaking as a friend, I'd much rather take the money we save there and put it into better schools in the north—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Come on, buddy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —to put it into better health care in the north.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Work with me here. Work with me.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I am. We have been. Remember, you guys helped with the budget.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes. Well, sometimes we might help you; sometimes we might trip you up.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Work with each other. There's only about two minutes left.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So the point is, you're going to have to subsidize rail freight in the end, you're going to have to subsidize north of Cochrane, you're going to have ongoing capital that you're going to have to do—let me just finish, it's my time—and the Premier is now on the record saying that they want to maintain the bus services that are in all of our communities in northeastern Ontario that are currently served by the ONR.

I've talked to the people who are actually bidding on trying to do that work. They're saying, "The only way we can do it, number one, give me a monopoly," and number two, it's going to probably take some form of subsidization. So we're going to have to give the private sector a monopoly and I know what happened last time we had a monopoly with air service into Timmins: We were paying \$2,200 return—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We now have a public monopoly that's losing money hand over fist, is not reinvesting in capital, is diminishing service—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, I—hey Minister. Hey, I wasn't finished.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I thought you were supposed to ask questions.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Come on, buddy. I wasn't finished.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm just trying to respond, trying to work with you, here. Work with me.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Be nice.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Work with me.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So my point is that you're going to have to subsidize it in the end.

My final question is: How much money do you expect you're actually going to save on an annual basis when it comes to the subsidy? Can you provide—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not only will we save—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me finish the question. Can you provide this committee with how much you expect to save on the subsidy at the end of this privatization, if you have to privatize rail freight, if you have to privatize rail going north, passenger service to Moosonee, and you've



got to provide either a monopoly or some form of subsidy to the bus service—not talking about ONR; we'll get to that one later. Can you provide us with that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't agree with any of your presuppositions and I'm not in a position to know until any final—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How much do you want to bet that's what you're going to have to do?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Do you know what? We can have a gentleman's bet, but at this point, I'm not going to speculate on what the final will look like. But I can tell you that I believe, at the end of the day, that you will have much-improved service, both on the freight and passenger side, to the north at a lower cost.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The only one who buys that is Rick Bartolucci. Nobody else buys it up north. Sorry, Minister.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** With that, it's now the government's turn. Ms. Cansfield.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Minister, we were interrupted. I didn't know if you had anything else you wanted to say about the prescription drug program. And then I have a couple of questions I'd like to ask.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We were on the property tax system, right?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** No, we were on prescription drugs.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Oh, I'm sorry.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I was thrilled about the answer on the other.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I didn't move my pages up enough. There we go. I think I got it all out. We talked about the ODB and the first \$100. The \$2 copayment: I had a chance to speak about that.

Income thresholds will not be indexed to inflation, so there won't be a creep on this. It covers more and more people over time. I think that pretty much covers that particular question.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much. In the last file, you identified that—I think it was in the beginning of your discussion—we had identified some savings in the budget. Could you elaborate on that for me?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** On April 25 of this year, we announced updates to the fiscal plan to make the budget still stronger. The proposed changes contain no net new spending and include the following new savings proposals to support other important priorities: the government is moving to lower the cost of the top 10 generic drugs to achieve an additional \$55 million a year in savings; the government has committed to further reducing spending on consultants by \$20 million in 2012-13.

Between 2002-03 and 2011-12, Ontario reduced spending on consultants by about 45%. You'll recall that the previous government laid off all kinds of public servants and rehired many of them as consultants at higher rates, so there were no real savings achieved. I'll provide to the committee and table the information with respect to just how many were involved and what the dollar costs

were, but we have reduced the cost of consultants by almost 45% since assuming office.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** If that's the case, if we are doing well, why aren't we accelerating? Why aren't we saying, "We're going to deal with this budget deficit earlier than what we had proposed"?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Returning to a balanced budget is the key fiscal objective. It's not the only goal. As I indicated earlier and I think most of us would agree, it's a means to an end: ensuring that Ontarians continue to receive the best value through the best education and health care systems possible, and a stronger economy. Our plan, we believe, is reasonable, it's responsible and it's balanced. Over the next three years, as I indicated earlier, there are \$4 of expense measures being taken for each \$1 of revenue measure.

I also believe it's important to note that the deficit isn't the only indicator of fiscal health and sustainability. In fact, even before the budget achieves balance in 2017-18, the measures in this budget will help support the province in improving its fiscal health and sustainability even earlier, which will provide a strong foundation for the longer-term sustainability of core services like health and education.

Another indicator that the government's fiscal plan is on track for sustainability is measuring the province's primary budget balance; that is, the surplus deficit, excluding interest on debt expense. Achieving a primary surplus is generally an important step in reducing the net debt-to-GDP ratio.

Consistent with the peaking of the province's net debt-to-GDP ratio, we expect Ontario to achieve a primary budget balance by 2014-15; that is, our expenditures without interest, based on the debt that goes back to Confederation, will be in line with the revenues. That's the primary. That's the first step. It's at that point that the rate of growth in the net debt-to-GDP ratio begins to level off. That actually happens in 2014-15. That's when we get back to primary surplus.

In effect, from 2014-15 through to 2017-18, the deficit is equal to the amount of interest we pay. That interest, of course, is based on debts that have been incurred since Confederation.

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**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Dhillon.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Minister, what has the government done to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being used effectively and responsibly?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In 2009, the Premier announced new accountability measures to protect Ontario taxpayers, including rules that prohibited consultants from being able to bill for food expenses, hospitality or incidental costs, and the establishment of a public website with expense information for cabinet ministers and senior management in government ministry. The website was launched on April 1, 2010, with expense information for the Premier and all other cabinet ministers, parlia-

mentary assistants, political staff and senior management of the Ontario public service.

The travel, meal and hospitality expense directive sets out expense rules for staff at ministries and government agencies to help ensure that taxpayer dollars are used wisely. The directive was updated in 2010 to provide increased accountability and transparency by expanding the coverage to 21 of Ontario's largest agencies and organizations, requiring the public disclosure of expense information for senior ministry management and senior executives in those agencies and organizations, and also ensuring that the rules are clearly articulated.

The Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009, provides further oversight by giving the Integrity Commissioner the authority to review expense claims of the senior officials in the 21 agencies and organizations.

In 2010, the government introduced the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, which includes new rules and higher accountability standards for hospitals, local health integration networks and the broader public sector, including hospitals, universities, colleges and school boards, around the use of external lobbyists, consultants and expenses. There are now three directives targeted to the BPS organizations covered by the act: procurement, expenses and perks. These measures protect the interests of taxpayers and strengthen the government's accountability.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you, Minister.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. MacCharles.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Minister, in my riding as, I'm sure, in most of our ridings, I do get a lot of calls about the future of the CPP. In these challenging economic times, people are thinking about their future, and we talked about old age security earlier. You've referenced before a modest increase to the CPP, and I'm wondering if you could elaborate on that, please.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Thank you, Tracy. In 2010, Canadian Ministers of Finance committed to working together on pension reform options, including a modest, fully funded and gradual expansion of CPP retirement benefits. Since then, Ontario has continued to advocate for such an expansion of CPP.

It's important to strike a balance between the need for more predictable retirement incomes, particularly for those individuals in the middle-income range, and the additional costs that will be imposed on businesses and workers as a result. Compromise will be necessary. Improvements must be pre-funded, intergenerationally equitable and affordable for employees and employers. Ontario also believes any increase should be phased in to ensure a smooth transition for workers and businesses.

Our discussion paper on the retirement income system, entitled *Securing Our Retirement Future: Consulting with Ontarians on Canada's Retirement Income System*, which I released in October 2010, sought input from Ontarians on possible approaches to CPP enhancement and pooled registered pension plans. Moderate-income families simply are not saving enough for retirement. We, as a

society, need to address this issue now rather than later when, frankly, it will be too late.

Both the federal government and the Ontario government commissioned economists to look at retirement income savings. Both economists found that a significant minority of middle-income Ontarians are not saving enough for their retirement. The good news is we have time now to begin to address this, just as federal governments in the past—I remember the Chrétien government in the late 1990s moved to put the Canada pension plan on a more sustainable footing. It was not a particularly popular thing to do at that time, but now it is one of the safest public pension plans in the world and is looked at from around the world. So we have time to address this, because this problem is going to unfold over time.

To address the concerns about the timing of a CPP enhancement and the impact that an increase in contributions may have during this economic recovery, Ontario is working with other governments to develop what I would call a responsible and manageable phase-in strategy.

I've also had the opportunity to work with the Canadian Federation of Labour and other groups, as well as business groups, to continue to force the debate on post-retirement income because we do still have time to address this, and address it appropriately, to avoid what could be very challenging social issues for the elderly in the future.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** If my constituents in Pickering-Scarborough East, or anyone in Ontario, for that matter, wanted to find more information about these planned changes, would they go to the Ministry of Finance website, look through the budget? What would you recommend?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, there's information that can be linked to on our ministry's website. Frankly, I haven't gone there myself; that's why I looked at my deputy and hesitated. I believe there is information available there. Deputy?

**Mr. Steve Orsini:** The CPP site itself has a lot of information—the federal government. A number of discussion papers have been written by research groups. If you're interested, as part of providing support for the committee, we can provide that information.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Great. Thank you. I was just interested in where to direct people.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. Sandals.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Minister, one of the regulation areas that falls under your ministry is auto insurance. Before we rose in June, one of the things we dealt with was a private member's bill from one of the NDP members with regard to auto insurance. I know in Guelph, with my constituents, there was significant concern about what impact that would have on them. I wonder if you could help us understand what the impact of that private member's bill would have on auto insurance rates for people in Ontario.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That particular private member's bill was a poorly thought-out piece of legislation that would lead to a substantial increase in insurance



costs for Ontario drivers. For instance, according to FSCO, it could mean average premium increases in the north of over 30%. Effectively, the legislation would require people from northern Ontario to subsidize the insurance of people living in downtown Toronto. The legislation would unfairly require people in one area of the province to pay for the costs incurred in another.

In today's challenged global economic climate, it would be unfair to place an additional burden on Ontarians by supporting legislation that would cause average premiums to go up across the province.

Territory is only one factor in the price of a premium and relates to the geographic risks based on where those people tend to drive.

The NDP and the member who introduced it want drunk drivers and other reckless drivers to pay less for insurance. In their private member's bill, a driving safety record only includes actual accidents. Effectively, if you get caught drunk driving but don't get into an accident, your premium won't go up.

Others across the province are talking about the significant flaws with the bill. Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada CEO Andrew Murie was quoted as saying they "would strongly advocate that this bill be rejected. In our view, the bill sends all the wrong messages, punishes responsible drivers, rewards dangerous drivers, and will increase the risk to Ontario road users."

He then goes on to say, "By excluding reliable evidence of crash risk, the bill treats high-risk drivers the same way as low-risk drivers. In essence, the bill will force responsible drivers to subsidize the insurance premiums of dangerous drivers"—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Dwight, I thought we were friends.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We are, Gilles. I'm trying to protect you from your colleague.

"This aspect of the bill is blatantly unfair. Moreover, by keeping the insurance premiums artificially low for dangerous drivers, the bill will encourage them to continue driving.

"The flawed proposal also does not take into account the make, model and year of the car. The bill is poorly modeled after California legislation."

California, by the way, has some of the highest average insurance premiums in the United States, with benefits coverage that is substantially less than what we have here in Ontario.

Our government's plan is different. Instead of pitting one group of people against another, we are addressing the pressure of premiums head-on by looking at the cost in those areas affected and taking a strong stance against fraud and abuse in the system.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I understand, looking at some data that came out recently, that in fact there has been a significant flattening of the curve in terms of auto insurance rates, so that bears out the policy decisions that have been made.

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**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mrs. Cansfield.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** If I may, I'd like to build on that, though. The auto fraud is an issue.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Absolutely.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** It's a very significant issue. It's probably one of the most non-partisan issues; it impacts so many people. We've done some things—I think that's really important to acknowledge. Maybe we could talk about that and then the future as well.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** For sure. We recognized this a couple of years ago; in fact, in the 2011 Ontario budget, the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force, which includes representatives from the insurance agency, academia, the justice sector and consumers. The task force is mandated to make recommendations aimed at addressing fraudulent and abusive practices.

The 2012 budget announced the adoption of strong new measures to reduce auto insurance fraud and enhance consumer protection, including enhanced auto insurance fraud training for police officers. We started a pilot project using health care claims for an auto insurance database to help health care providers to flag clinics misusing their credentials and cut down on identity theft. We also amended regulations to enhance the ability of insurers to seek verification of invoices to ensure that treatments were in fact provided. We issued a superintendent's guideline to ensure that insurers are not being invoiced for medical devices at significantly higher than the market rate.

We've also encouraged the industry to communicate the issue of fraud across a number of media platforms and measure the current state of consumer engagement and awareness on the issues, and require the CEOs of automobile insurers in Ontario to annually attest that their accident benefit cost controls are effective and that legitimate claimants are fairly treated.

In December of last year, the task force issued its interim report, which was posted on the Ministry of Finance's website. The task force is continuing its important work and will, by the end of this year, submit final recommendations on the following:

- the regulation of health clinics;
- other gaps in regulation;
- the establishment of a dedicated fraud unit;
- consumer education and engagement strategy;
- a single Web portal for auto insurance claims.

The government is also proposing amendments to provide the Superintendent of Financial Services with powers to impose administrative monetary penalties for contraventions of legislation and regulations; for instance, fraudulent health care claims. The automobile insurance reforms that came into effect on September 1, 2010, introduce measures that address abuse and fraudulent activities in the system. These measures include a \$3,500 minor injury cap, which covers the most common injuries found in fraudulent claims; optional benefits and new controls for housekeeping, caregiver and attendant care benefits, another frequent area of abuse; restrictions on assessments and longer response times to adequately

review claims; and a wider discretion on the use of insurer examinations to help combat fraud and abuse.

The Financial Services Commission of Ontario, commonly known as FSCO, has raised the profile of its enforcement actions in the auto insurance sector. Over the past year, it has laid a number of charges against health care clinics and individuals affiliated with those clinics who have billed insurers for goods and services that were never provided. FSCO works closely with law enforcement agencies, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, industry stakeholders and other jurisdictions to combat this type of fraud and abuse. FSCO also helps consumers by using its websites to alert them to scams that FSCO has investigated in its regulated sectors and by distributing brochures on these scams.

One of the best defences against scams is a well-informed consumer. In 2003 and 2005, the government added new provisions under the Insurance Act to address various unfair and deceptive practices. This included the activities of tow truck drivers and vehicle repair services.

Fraud is a very serious issue and leads to higher premiums for Ontario families. It's clear that we have implemented and continue to implement policies that address this issue. Our government is committed to protecting Ontario drivers and their families from fraudulent activity.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much, Minister. I think the other important part of this is the discussions you've had also with the insurance industry and their acceptance of their responsibility in this area as well, and I'd like to say thank you for that.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Dhillon, we have about a minute and a half—less than a minute.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Minister, you mentioned that Ontario remains the largest net contributor to the equalization program. Doesn't equalization come from the federal government instead of provinces paying provinces?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Equalization payments are paid by the federal government. Ontarians contribute to the program through the federal taxes they pay to Ottawa. It's estimated that Ontario taxpayers contribute approximately 40% to total federal revenues. Therefore, in 2012-13, Ontarians will contribute approximately \$6 billion to the equalization program. In return, we will receive \$3.3 billion back. The difference between what Ontarians pay into the program through their federal taxes and what the province receives back from the program is \$2.7 billion, making Ontario the largest net contributor to the federal equalization program.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And thank you very much. It's now the turn of the official opposition. Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Minister, you clearly said, and Mr. Bissonne has already brought out this—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Bisson.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Bisson, sorry—that the decision to cancel the Mississauga power plant was made at a time when your party was behind in the polls, and you've since been clear that you're comfortable with that. You

then try to justify that form of decision-making by saying that you were listening to the will of the people.

Do you believe that every piece of government policy should require a referendum?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, I have an email that I'm going to ask the clerk to distribute to you. While it's being distributed, this was something that was quoted from the Globe and Mail, and other news outlets were reporting that your decision was based on polling that showed that you were behind. Is that the way you formulate sound public policy? Are your policy decisions based on that?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My question is to the Minister, thank you very much.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You didn't mention that above that, the authors, who by the way are Ontario public servants, say that the Premier said that if we took this decision, it had nothing to do with getting votes. You ought to read into the record the full tenor of what's in there.

This is a memo from one official at the Ministry of Energy to the other, so it's hard for me to comment on what they were getting at. I'm just trying to read the last piece here.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, the quote in there is also—as you're reading that, Minister, Rick Jennings, the assistant deputy minister of energy, in this email which we have just passed on to you, is quoted as saying “The Liberals have won all five seats in Mississauga handily so they will see this ... cancellation as a big success.”

I guess my question is, what did he mean by that? Do polling-based decisions have anything to do with that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This is a memo between two officials at the Ministry of Energy. I know Mr. Jennings; I don't know this Mr. McKeever. As I read this, Mr. McKeever is simply speculating that because the Liberals won the election in the fall, they would be happy. He's right about that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Polling-based decisions.

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** But it's speculation by a couple of bureaucrats.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It is. This is pure speculation on the part of a couple of officials at the Ministry of Energy, one of whom I do know, not well, but we have worked together in the past. I can't comment on this.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You can't comment on it at all? It's just ironic or coincidental that the fact that—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Mr. Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Go ahead. You have the floor.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. So “speculating” is what you're calling that. I call it perhaps purely coincidental that your polling in fact led you to that decision, perhaps, and these gentlemen were perhaps implying that perhaps you kind of won out because of the fact that you



listened to the people in your polling—decision-based polling.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind you of what I've said, and I've reviewed Instant Hansard. I said earlier that I was not aware of any polling.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** That's what it is now.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Instant Hansard is. I will also remind you that this doesn't say anything about that at all. What was important was that on October 6 we won the election and we proceeded to implement a campaign undertaking that we had made and that, frankly, your leader and the leader of the third party had made.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. I find that the comment made by Mr. McKeever to Mr. Jennings—and I'll read it for the record: "Just saw some liberal types in a Mississauga election" headquarters "being asked, 'What about the cost of cancelling this plant where they have already poured concrete?'. Answer was, 'They were warned back in May that any work they did was at their own risk and not the responsibility'.... Interesting." And that was sent from Garry McKeever on that.

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So I guess, again, sir, we talk about this polling that you've done. I guess my question to you is—and I want to go back to the point that I made earlier, where you clearly said, and Mr. Bisson had already brought it up, that the decision of the Mississauga power plant cancellation was a decision made at a time when your party was behind in the polls, and that you've since been clear, and you've said you're comfortable with that. Then you try to justify the form of decision-making by saying that you were listening to the will of the people, keeping in mind that that decision to cancel that power plant was a couple of weeks before the October 6 election.

I asked the question; I'm not so certain that I got a response, but I'll ask it again: Do you believe that every piece of government policy should require a referendum?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I said before and will say again is, no.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No. Every piece of government policy should not require referendum. Except shortly afterwards—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You just created a double negative. Let me be clear: Every decision government takes should not be put to referendum.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Every decision that the government makes should not be put to a referendum?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes. I don't want to give a double negative, lest it be misinterpreted.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** All right. Except shortly thereafter, you said the HST was tough medicine that most people didn't want, but it was the right thing to do. So which is it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, we didn't put that to a referendum.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No. But in your opinion, what should a government do? Bend to the will of the people with no regard for long-term outcomes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The government should lead and do what's in the best interest of all Ontarians, something that this Premier and this government clearly are prepared to do. The people in Mississauga and Etobicoke overwhelmingly were opposed. We heard representations from their municipal leaders, community leaders and their local elected officials, and the government chose in the last election to make a campaign commitment that, if re-elected, we would move to relocate the plant.

We were subsequently re-elected, and upon re-election, we began the process of making the decision that led to the decision to relocate the plant, that led to the settlement that takes \$180 million to relocate that plant to Sarnia-Lambton, to a coal-fired generating station that had been mothballed by the government—I don't know if it had been mothballed, but it had been written off as the asset had been impaired when the government's policy was established—which will now create a new gas plant, which will create jobs during the construction phase. It will also create permanent jobs, I think in the vicinity of about 90 or 100, if I'm not mistaken. We believe that in the circumstances, as difficult as it was, that we did need to undertake to fulfill the undertaking we made in the general election.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, it did create jobs; I'll grant you that, Minister. But again, all that money and all those jobs since went down the drain. Again, is it the will of the government to bend to the will of the people with no regard, or to play father-knows-best and impose a policy on people without any consultations? Because, sir, if the proper consultations had been done in the months prior to, then I would think that there would not have been a Mississauga gas plant. There wouldn't even have been a hole dug if the proper consultations had been happening.

Why did it take up until two weeks prior to an election that the government decided to pull the plug on the Mississauga gas plant? You're wasting taxpayers' money, and that's what we—and you're aware of it as well. It should have been handled considerably earlier, way before there was tremendous wasteful spending, as the taxpayers will see it. And now they bear the burden of this unfortunate blunder at the Mississauga gas plant, sir.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think the net benefit associated with a new gas plant in Sarnia-Lambton, coupled with the fact that we have respected the will of the people of Etobicoke—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Sir, I'm not talking about the Sarnia gas plant right now.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and Mississauga, as expressed by their leadership.

The Sarnia gas plant will provide electricity to Ontario for the next 20 years, however long the power purchase agreement is. It will provide power, so there will be that benefit. It will employ people. It will pay property taxes. It will serve Ontarians. I think—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Sorry, I understand that, but that's Sarnia. I'm not talking about that, Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We were acting in the interests of the people of Mississauga and Etobicoke—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm talking about the Mississauga gas plant—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, and that's where that plant is being moved to. Maybe you didn't understand.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** —and the proper consultations that should have taken place long before. Why, all of a sudden, when they got really, really loud and noisy just before an election, did you then decide to pull the plug on the Mississauga gas plant? Now, with all that money that had been poured into it and all the other deals that you had been working with regard to property in Mississauga, labour, materials, penalties, all those other due diligence things that have to have been acquired, suddenly the decision was made two weeks prior to the election.

Why wasn't proper consultation done way back to ensure—because then, at that point in time, I would have thought that the mayor of Mississauga and the other people would have said, "No, we don't want it." You might have been listening to them then, and hence not have wasted all this taxpayer money.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact—and I'm going to ask the Minister of Energy to give a more complete response to the history of this—there were a number of different sites that were looked at and there was considerable public consultation. As is the case when we did the Hearn plant, for instance, here in Toronto, there was—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The Hearn plant? Wasn't that one, sir, that was a coal-fired plant that was converted to natural gas?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If I may—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I believe it was.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —there was considerable opposition to the establishment of a gas plant. No, there was not a coal plant at the Hearn site. You're thinking of the Mississauga coal-fired site.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Back in the early 1980s—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know what was there in the early 1980s. There was nothing there at the time we approved going ahead with the new gas-fired plant down there. I'll undertake to ask the Minister of Energy to respond to you with respect to the range of consultations that went into both the RFP that awarded this contract as well as the different sites that were looked at, as I recall, over a number of years. I think it would be more appropriate for him to respond to that particular question.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Rick. Minister, I hope we can—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, Michael, I would like to apologize for my outburst earlier. It was inappropriate, Mr. Chair. I apologize to you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I was hoping we could continue in a more parliamentary—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I know you're a fine—now, hopefully, when the lights are out, we're still friends. I apologize. It was out of order.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Absolutely. You know what? We've all got a job to do and I know these are some

tough questions. It was a big decision and it's not an easy thing, perhaps, if I was in your chair, but thank goodness I'm not for now.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Now, that's one thing we do agree on.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** He did say for now, though.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Yes. I wouldn't want to be explaining \$190 million.

My question, just slightly back to that, would be, are there any plans, or are you considering a new tax to cover the costs of relocating the Mississauga power plant, or even, if the contingency fund runs out, for the relocation or the cancellation of the Oakville plant at all?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Obviously, your government is always looking for new sources of revenue. Are you familiar with the Western Climate Initiative and Ontario's obligation to the WCI?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Actually, we have cut taxes quite substantially in the last four years. We have reduced, first of all, the personal income tax rate on the first \$37,000 of income. We have taken the general corporate rate and reduced it from 15% to 11.5%. We have reduced the business education tax—evened it out and reduced it, depending on where you are in the province. We've cut the small business tax rate. We've eliminated the capital tax. We've created enormous sales tax credits for Ontarians of modest incomes. We have reduced the regulatory burden associated with the collection of corporate and sales tax for our businesses, which has been widely applauded—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I appreciate that, Minister. I appreciate that, for sure, and the answer, but what I had asked was, are you familiar with your government's obligation to the Western Climate Initiative?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are no binding obligations in that climate initiative.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Are you committed to the Western Climate Initiative?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are no binding obligations. We're committed to the reduction of greenhouse gases in the environment, because we do think global warming is a reality, but there are no binding undertakings in the Western Climate Initiative.

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**Mr. Michael Harris:** I will submit to the committee an order paper question that actually states that the government is committed to the Western Climate Initiative and its obligations. I'll pass that over to the clerk, I guess. I only have two copies.

Are you familiar with or aware—obviously, Quebec is a member of the WCI and met its January 1 start date to implement the cap-and-trade scheme, or what we'd like to call a carbon tax scheme. Ontario is still a part or a member of that organization. It plans to raise about \$2.6 billion in new revenue through this cap-and-trade scheme over seven years. Have you provided, or has your ministry done, any estimates on how much new revenue your



government would plan to raise through this cap-and-trade program?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, because we're not participating in that, and I think that was announced some three years ago. When the United States decided not to proceed on cap and trade, even though there were no binding undertakings in the Western Climate Initiative, that all fell apart.

I'm not familiar with the correspondence you handed out, which I think is from the Ministry of the Environment. I'll refer the balance of that to the Ministry of the Environment.

To your specific question: We have not looked at that because the government has no intention of moving forward on that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Have you ever talked to the Minister of the Environment about cap and trade and its obligations under the Western Climate Initiative?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are no binding obligations. We have said publicly, I think three or four years ago, that we were not moving to cap and trade in the absence of agreement among all provinces and states and the federal government of the United States.

Again, I'm going to refer to the Minister of the Environment, but my recollection of the Western Climate Initiative is that none of the undertakings of it are binding.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Do you know if your ministry has had any financial assessments to the effect of how cap and trade would affect Ontario businesses?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I certainly haven't seen anything, but I will undertake to see. There are a lot of studies that are done within the ministry that never make their way to me personally. They're certainly not part of government policy, and certainly not part of any of the six budgets that I have delivered or the three budgets that Mr. Sorbara delivered. I can tell you at this point that there has been no discussion, no debate, as to whether or not we proceed with that, to my knowledge. Certainly, at finance, that has not been in any budget that I or my predecessor have tabled with the Legislature. In fact, I'm pleased that we've made Ontario's personal and corporate taxes much more competitive than they were when we came to office.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I think a lot of folks are nervous, obviously, about how Ontario is going to afford or pay for the future cancellations costs for Oakville. Has your government, or have you, been in discussions or considered a carbon tax at all?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have rejected a carbon tax.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I've got a quote from one of your colleagues, Glen Murray, in 2007. He said, "It is time for all of us to start to get comfortable with two words: carbon tax. Without it, all these dreams of a green tomorrow are hallucinations." What would you say to that?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Maybe he was hallucinating.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Come on. We're trying to get along here.

This government will not be introducing a carbon tax.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay. I guess, just to close out—I think we've got about a minute left?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Two minutes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Two minutes left. On the contingency funds—I have a question coming in here. No, that's just confirming the order paper question that was submitted to the Clerk.

In your own backyard, in fact—Leamington, I believe—there was a lot of circumstances around Leamington in terms of the crops, obviously; drought is a situation, scenario. How much are you planning for, or does the ministry make any estimates or expectations of possible commitments that will have to be made under the contingency fund on top of what has already been drawn?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, in fact, working with the OFA and farmers across Ontario, we created risk management, which is a much more responsible approach to this. Unfortunately, your party opposed that. The federal government has refused to participate in it. We think the Risk Management Program will help us manage these situations in a way that we weren't able to in the past.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you very much. I'll pass it on to our friends in the NDP.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Bisson.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We have friends on both sides of the House. It's so much fun.

So, carrying on in regard to the ONTC, a couple of questions, this time more along the lines of the pensions, because, as you know, there's a liability when it comes to ensuring that there is proper financial support for the ongoing pension and benefit liability for retired members. So who do you expect will administer the ONTC pension benefits in the event of the closure of the ONTC?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The pension has been horribly mismanaged and underfunded; that's true. It's completely mismanaged. That is one of the reasons we've had to take the moves we have. It's unfortunate that there hasn't been a more responsible management of that particular pension.

I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, because that is part of how we're going to resolve this. But, again, I would point out that, like so many other things that went on there, the pension itself was horribly managed.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Wow. Can I, for the record, just very quickly—you keep on saying how badly managed the ONTC was, and to what degree that enrages, I think, a whole bunch of people in northeastern Ontario, not just the employees and the management staff at the ONTC, but northerners, because it's long been known that part of the problem at the ONTC is they are not properly able to make the decisions that they need to make because the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is always running interference on the decision-making.

For example, prior to the last election, there was a decision in regard to the refurbishment contracts that were going on at North Bay in regard to a contract that came from Montreal. Northern development essentially told that organization it couldn't bid on a multi-million dollar contract which would have brought much-needed revenue to the ONTC. It wasn't because it was mismanaged, quite frankly; it was because northern development and mines did not allow the ONTC board and its management and staff to make the decisions that needed to be made.

So if you're going to start throwing rocks around in this glass house, please recognize you live within that glass house.

Anyway, that's my point.

So you'll provide us information in regard to who will administer the ONTC pension benefits?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. I'm going to refer that to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. And what do you estimate are the legacy costs of those benefits?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm going to refer that to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

What I can tell you unequivocally, Gilles, is that that pension has not been properly funded. The other thing I can tell you is that that contract you just referenced wouldn't have made much of a dent at all in the ongoing challenges faced by that organization. I think, realistically, we want to put in place a better service for northerners at a sustainable cost where there are realistic budgets set. We have had to intervene with some \$470 million over the last nine years. We have worked with the board repeatedly. Business plans have repeatedly not been met, projections repeatedly not met. Customers using particularly the rail service have been going down. Costs associated with the pension plan have not been adequately covered.

It is a litany of these things. We have tried over the course of the last nine years to get it on a stable footing. Not only has that not happened; things have gotten progressively worse, to the point where the workers' pensions there are horribly underfunded.

We will move forward, and I'll refer that to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to give you a more complete response, as they have oversight for that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, Minister, let's be clear here: The ONTC board and its management have been fairly severely handcuffed by decisions from northern development and mines and this government. Yes, you've given capital in order to upgrade the line, in order to replace locomotives, in order to do a number of investments at the ONTC, and those are well appreciated. But to try to lay this entirely at the feet of the ONTC, I think, is a bit much. To say it's a terribly run organization is stretching it, at best.

What northerners have said from the beginning is that we recognize there are things that can be done in order to find revenue streams for the ONTC that could result in less subsidy being provided to the ONTC, and that there

are decisions that could be made that would increase the benefits to northerners, increase the service and make it more efficient. The thing that really irks people in northern Ontario—mayors, chambers of commerce, unions and others—is that those decisions aren't being done by northerners. Essentially, the cabinet has decided it knows best: Queen's Park is going to tell northern Ontario what it needs, and hardly a conversation has happened with anybody in regard to what's going to happen with the ONTC. This whole divestment process that you've laid out essentially is a conversation between the ministries of northern development and infrastructure renewal and some private sector entities, along with the ONTC board that you have appointed. Mayors, councils, chambers of commerce, customers—God, I've talked to customers on the line, and they have really not been consulted either.

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We're having a bit of a problem with your discourse. It's a line you keep on repeating. I understand it. Joseph Goebbels had a great line: If you repeat it often enough, maybe people will believe it. But people in the north aren't buying it.

Let's get to the question. On the question of the unfunded liability of the ONTC plan, do you expect to honour the unfunded liability on the wind-down or the—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right. And does that mean to say that you're going to provide us with a question through his answer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Whatever the normal processes are, we will respond and meet our obligations, both to the committee and to the Legislature.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Do you intend on the divestment to continue to fund the plan, where there are no more employees contributing to the plan? Because, obviously, the contributions of ongoing employees helped to pay the ongoing benefits. How do you plan on dealing with that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The employee contributions and the employer contributions have been way below what are necessary to make it sustainable. That's another part of the mismanagement, in my view, that's gone on there.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, those were decisions that were made that got—listen, let's be clear here.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I am being clear, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** A lot of those decisions were not able to be made because the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines wouldn't allow them to make them. So let's be clear for the record here.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I disagree with you entirely.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Plus FSCO and the rest of them are looking out on—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That is completely inaccurate.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, FSCO's not looking at the pension of the ONTC?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, this problem is much deeper than that. It fundamentally comes down to the fact that fewer and fewer of the northerners are using the ser-



vice. I mean, 17% seat occupancy with a ticket subsidy of I think some \$470 per ticket—that is not sustainable for northerners. Northerners pay that, by the way, through their taxes too. The vast majority of northerners don't use—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And so does everybody else. I, as a taxpayer, pay for GO Transit. I, as a taxpayer, pay for Toronto city transit, and gladly so.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** At much less, much smaller per capita funding. It's much less.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, all taxpayers pay for infrastructure in Ontario. Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Sorry, with respect, this service is not being properly run. It's been improperly run. It's losing money. You're taxing—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, then, where the hell have you been for the last eight years?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We tried repeatedly to get it working, and it didn't. In fact, the hole got deeper.

Let me just give you some facts and figures, just so that you'll know. The average subsidy per rider on GO Transit is under \$2, so there is a big difference. I believe, frankly, that there will be better service, through buses and other modes, that will result from the decision we're taking that I believe—we disagree on this, Gilles; I get that, I understand that—will improve service for northerners.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So why don't you allow northerners to make the decision about what has to be done?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Northerners are very involved in the decision. There are northern members of cabinet. There are northern members. The minister responsible—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They are not involved in the decision, Minister. Call Tom Laughren, call Al Spacek, call Al McDonald, call Mr. Palangio—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And hopefully, the next time we meet, when they come down, they'll take the train and not the plane.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, call all of the mayors and the chambers of commerce. None of them are involved in the decision-making.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's a good example, though. You have meetings—and we'll be happy to have meetings with them, but we are moving forward in what we believe is in the best interests of northerners, which will enhance service to the north. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But that's the key word, here: It's what you believe and not what northerners believe.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We'll see where this goes, but as I say, this is unsustainable as it is.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, Minister, you and I can debate this ad infinitum. Let's agree that we disagree.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, we could. We're not going to agree. That's right. I want to do what's in the best interests of all northerners.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If your argument is that this thing is so badly run, my only question to you would be, where the hell have you been for the last eight years?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We've been trying to fix it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, you haven't.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Why should somebody in Kenora subsidize this?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You've not allowed North Bay to bid on contracts—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Why should somebody in Kenora—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —and you're still not allowing North Bay to bid on contracts that they're able to get to provide revenue for that agency.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Why do taxpayers—answer me this: Why should somebody in Kenora—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** One at a time. I'm looking at the poor interpreter. Please, one at a time.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Why should somebody in Kenora subsidize this? They pay taxes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, whoa. Why should somebody—what a statement. Are you saying you should hypothecate taxes in Ontario so that only southerners—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, you did. You suggested northerners don't have a say in this. Well, I suggest to you they do. They do in Kenora; they do everywhere across Ontario.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No. Are you suggesting, Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You're the one who suggested northerners should make the decision on this, and they are involved in the decision, just as they are in deciding everything else.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But Minister, are you suggesting that you should hypothecate taxes by region?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. You did. You just did.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, I did not.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You just said—not only northerners, you just said—you didn't mention anybody from the northwest. All you talked about was the northeast; you didn't even include the northwest. What do you have against the northwest?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Because the ONTC is a—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This is a political game, Gilles, with respect. You want to continue to foist on the north an inefficient railway that very few of the people there are using—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Keep on digging a hole there, Dwight.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's their taxes that are paying for this, as well as southern Ontarians, as well as people in the northwest. You did not mention one community in the northwest.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Because there's no service from Ontario Northland in the northwest.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There's no service in the northwest. That's exactly right.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** From the Ontario Northland—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You're the one who started dividing these things up originally, not me.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, my God.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think all Ontarians have a stake in this. By the way, I think the vast majority of northeastern Ontarians who don't take advantage of the service—I can tell you, I've met with them—have told me they won't take advantage of it because it just has not been well run. And we will—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Are you done?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —at the end of the day, have a better service at a more reasonable cost that will service all northerners.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Are you done?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not quite. No, I'm not, as a matter of fact.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. Tell me when you're done, because—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We're going to proceed—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Are you just going to talk out the clock for the next 15 minutes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We are going to proceed to offer a better service at a reasonable cost. Yes, the pension plan is in deep trouble—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you're not going to answer questions?

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** He's answering the question.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, he's not. He's editorializing.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm answering the question. I've listened to your rant and your editorializing, which was laced with factual inaccuracies. You put words in my mouth. You want to get into the corner with Gordie Howe, and the elbows are going to go up.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Ontario Northland—northern development and mines has nothing to do with Ontario Northland? Come on, Dwight.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We're tight, we're friends, but you get in the corner with Gordie Howe, the elbows are going to go up.

You, in my view, are defending the indefensible. You want to preserve—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Carry on. Carry on.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —a status quo in the northeast that is costing average northerners a lot of money.

I would much rather take the savings from that and build newer highways in the north, build better hospitals in the north. We're putting an architectural school in Sudbury. And, yes, the north includes Kenora. The north includes Rainy River. The north includes Thunder Bay, Nipigon—I've been all through there—Red Lake. That's all part of the north.

So, with respect, I don't think the money is being properly used. I think northerners are paying a heavy price for the inability of us to get this under control, and the time has come to make it right.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You guys should be applauding at this point. The Liberal members should all applaud, because if you took that Hansard and you ran it across northeastern Ontario, nobody would agree with you. Ontario Northland is—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's about all Ontario and northwestern Ontario.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I got three words and he's editorializing already. So you've had your rant.

The point is, the Ontario Northland is an organization that serves northeastern Ontario. It's an organization that was set up over 100 years ago by way of legislation from this particular Legislature. It doesn't serve the northwest; it is a northeastern Ontario organization, primarily along Highway 11 north from Cochrane to Moosonee.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So because we did something 100 years ago we should continue to do it?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no. You're trying to categorize this in a way that it's not. This is a transportation infrastructure along Highway 11, when it comes to rail, from Cochrane up to Constance Lake, from Cochrane up to Moosonee. That's essentially what this service is, all right? There's a number of customers along that rail service, from Lecours Lumber to Columbia Forest Products to Tembec, Xstrata and many others, who utilize the Ontario Northland rail service to ship their goods. Plus, there is a rail passenger service on it.

My point to you, my friend, is that the Ontario Northland in itself has not been able to make the decisions that it has wanted to make in order to make services better and make it more efficient because, quite frankly, northern development and mines, the ministry responsible for it, has never given it the ability to do that. That's why many, including myself, have said that this thing should be a stand-alone crown corp. It should be operated as a crown corp, with a proper subsidy. I've argued this with you privately. You can operate that thing for about \$28 million a year on subsidy and about \$10 million a year on capital. Yes, at the end of the day, decisions have to be made within the organization, but allow people who utilize the service, the customer base along the northeastern Ontario railway that is called Ontario Northland, to be part of the decision-making about what's going to happen with this organization.

Everybody accepts change; everybody knows change is going to happen. But throwing the baby out with the bathwater is not the solution.

So let me get back to the questions.

In regard to the pension liabilities—not pension liabilities, but in regard to continuing the benefits for retirees once the company is wrapped up, because I take it that's what you guys are intending on doing here, does the government intend to continue making sure that the retirees are going to get the benefits that they're entitled to?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I will refer that to the Ministry of Northern Development and get a complete answer back to you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay.

I asked you earlier, and I'm going to put these questions down in writing, can you provide this committee now with what you think the operating subsidies will be for the Little Bear and the Polar Bear from Cochrane to Moosonee?



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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think you asked that earlier—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and I've referred that to the ministry.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** As far as the capital needed on what they call—the anyway, the rail service from Cochrane to Moosonee. There are bridges along that line; there's going to be some need for capital as far as rail. Is it the intention of the government to continue to make sure that's in good repair?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Oh, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** As well as upgrading the cars that travel up to that line? Because currently there is some pretty old equipment there.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, it's astounding, when you think of the hundreds of millions we've put into that organization in the last nine years, that they're dilapidated.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh my God. Oh, jeez.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And I think that's part of the reason why northerners don't take it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, the reasons northerners don't take it are far more complicated than that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But yes, we have undertaken to maintain those services and we will maintain them appropriately.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, there used to be a time where people didn't take airplanes from Toronto to Timmins to the degree they do now.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, and that's why I don't think we need to have things the way they were 100 years ago.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And now that you have a competitive situation between both Porter—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This railway's not competitive.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can you let me finish?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No; this railway's not competitive.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Sorry, it's not.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I listened to you.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's going down.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Passengers are just not taking it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, you're fixated and not listening. The point I'm saying is, there used to be a time that, when it came to flights coming out of Timmins down to Toronto, it was very non-competitive and not a lot of people took it to the degree they do now. We have far more ridership. Why? Because we do have some competition.

As I said earlier, it's pretty hard to have competition along a rail line. You're not going to set up a second rail line in order to compete. That's why subsidy is provided.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We're now running buses and rails to the same places at the same time.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, and you do the same thing—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And they're both running less than half full.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Does that happen anywhere else in the world?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No; that's why it's crazy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, nowhere in the world do they run a bus and a train?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can't speak for other countries—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How about Brampton? How about Niagara to—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You don't have buses and rail running to the same towns at the same time run by the same company. I can assure you that a private company—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Do you know a thing called GO Transit?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, and they run at different times, and they're full—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Do they have buses?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They're not running at 20% capacity.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, you just said you don't have somebody who runs bus and rail at the same time. Go Transit runs bus and rail at the same time.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And they're full.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, because you have higher density of population here.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, exactly.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Wow; imagine that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So why do you need to have both a train and a bus when both are running two-thirds empty?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So because you live in an area of the province that doesn't have high density then you just say, "The hell with it; we don't have to do it?"

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, there will be a better service resultant from proper investment in one mode of transportation—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, Minister. Mon ami, mon ami.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And more northerners I think will continue to avail themselves of the \$179 ticket from Timmins to Toronto.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mon ami, mon ami.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The world has changed; I agree with you. It's very different than it was 20 years ago.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The first step is a long one.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And the first step is important. You can have your opinion, my friend, but you can't have your own facts. The fact is—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, Minister. You're playing with the facts hard and loose here. Come on.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —you've got buses and you've got rail lines running three-quarters empty to the same towns at the same time in dilapidated cars. The best way to fix this is to divest it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And whose fault is that? Whose fault is that?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know how you can spend \$479 million and not fix the cars. We're going to fix it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** First of all, you're not spending \$479 million.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and we're going to make it better for northerners.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, you're trying to take what is a 10-year investment and try to make it as if it's a one-year amount. The subsidy to the Ontario Northland on an annual basis is about \$28 million. There are times in the past—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's \$100 million a year—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's \$28 million a year on the operating—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —plus there have been special bailouts in I think—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's \$28 million a year on the operating side.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —four out of the five years I've been treasurer of Management Board—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Because you provided capital.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —plus the pension fund is underfunded—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Is there a difference between capital and operational?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —plus the—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** One at a time, please.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, I would ask him to shut up.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —ridership has been going down continually—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Either that, or we're going to double that man's pay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, no, we should double his pay. He's just agreed.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Why don't you say it in French, I'll say it in English, and that'll get—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** There we go. That'll save the trouble.

So there's a difference between capital and operational, and you're mixing the two of them together.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Really? I wouldn't have known that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You just figured that out. That's good.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I didn't learn that. I wouldn't have known that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I know you did. But you're trying to lump all the numbers together—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have to because we have to pay for it. Yes, you do have to look at all the numbers, Gilles, with respect. What happened to all the capital? Why are the trains dilapidated?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's like saying, "First of all, over 10 years, I hire you as an employee and I give you \$50,000 a year"—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Why are northerners not taking the service? Why, when the mayors came down here to talk about it, did they fly and not take the train?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, two points—why do you profess so hardly—man, you guys. Wow, you're bad on this one.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, I think I'm right on, because northerners are going to get a better service—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you pay somebody \$50,000 a year, and then the next line is, "I gave you \$500,000. What did you do with it?" That's essentially what you're saying: \$50,000 times 10 years is \$500,000. You're trying to argue—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, we're talking about \$400 million or \$500 million, number one—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's right; over 10 years.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's a lot of money.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** A huge amount of money.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Wow, and I give you \$50,000 a year, and I just gave you half a million—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The number of riders has been going like this.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So what's going to happen, Gilles, in my view—and we're going to disagree on this—is there will be a better service—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're using the figures to argue your own argument.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There will be a better service for northerners—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Time has now expired.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, come on.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm not sure how much was gained in this last interchange—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I agree. I completely agree.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** But in any event, it is now to the government side. Mr. Dhillon.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you very much, Chair. Minister, continuing on with the equalization issue, you've mentioned that equalization is outdated because it does not take into account the relative cost of providing public services, which is higher in Ontario. Can you please discuss this further?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, as soon as I get my notes. There we go.

In addition to private sector wages, the prices of property, goods and services are higher in Ontario than in many other regions of Canada. StatsCan has shown that prices in cities such as Toronto and Ottawa are considerably higher than the national average. As a number of studies have pointed out, as a result of these factors, Ontario faces higher cost pressures than other provinces.

These studies also demonstrate that because equalization does not take into account these relatively higher costs, Ontario is shortchanged in the program. In terms of delivering public services, in 2011-12, Ontario's per-person program spending is projected to be \$8,540. This



is the lowest among the provinces and considerably below the average spent across the other nine provincial governments. As the Drummond report put it, "Ontario runs one of the lowest-cost provincial governments in Canada relative to its GDP."

I think the other thing to note is that groups as diverse as Queen's University, David Dodge, the former clerk of the Privy Council, the governor of the Bank of Canada, and a number of others have pointed out the inadequacies and the unfairnesses contained in the equalization formula and how, to characterize Ontario as a have-not province is really not honest—certainly not intellectually honest—and is more designed to play politics than to deal with reality. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce did a great paper a couple of years ago—I'd refer everybody to it—that shows that not only are we net contributors to it, but we're getting shortchanged in what we get back.

By the way, other provinces agree with us. The whole equalization program has been so gerrymandered over the years that it really doesn't reflect anything.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you, Minister, for your answer.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. MacCharles.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** As some of the committee folks here know, I'm a former executive of Manulife and a small business owner. Now, as an MPP, I get lots of questions about corporate tax rates. That's something I'd like to focus on in this question. A number of people simply ask me why we are freezing corporate income tax and the business education tax rates. Again, I'm wondering if you could help clarify what's in the budget on that and what the plans are, going forward.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Thank you, Tracy. We're asking Ontario businesses to do their part as we move back to balance.

It's clear that the actions that the McGuinty government has taken over the past eight years have turned Ontario into one of the most competitive places for businesses to invest and create jobs. A recent analysis of 134 countries by Forbes magazine ranked Canada as the best country for business, crediting a reformed tax structure in Ontario as one of the key factors in this country's ranking. The government has significantly reduced business taxes, benefiting both large and small Ontario businesses. In total, we have reduced business taxes by more than \$8 billion per year. In 2011, the Financial Times of London ranked Ontario third only to California and New York as the world's favourite destination for foreign investment in North America.

Now we're asking businesses to do their part to help Ontario balance its budget. We are not raising the corporate tax rate; what we're doing is freezing the general corporate tax rate at 11.5% until our budget is balanced. I remind you, Tracy, and through you, your constituents and the people of Ontario, that we have taken the general rate from 15% down to 11.5%. As I indicated earlier, we've also reduced the small business rate in Ontario. We have eliminated the capital tax. We have created a whole range of other savings through less tax compliance costs.

Instead of having two sales taxes to comply with, they now have one. Input tax credits represent a huge unlocking of hidden taxes that were foisted on Ontario businesses for many years.

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We're also proposing to temporarily freeze business education tax rate reductions, beginning in 2013. This move would avoid revenue decreases, providing fiscal savings growing to more than \$300 million annually by 2014-15.

In 2017-18, when Ontario returns to a balanced budget, we are committed to resuming both the corporate income tax and business education tax rate reductions.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Great. I'll take the next question, if I may, Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Surely.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you. That's great to hear we're committing to resuming both the corporate income tax and the business education tax rate, once the books are balanced. I think that's a great message.

The other question that we always ask in business is, how are we doing? I think we have to ask that question in government too, in terms of the performance of our economy. My question is, how did the economy do in Ontario overall in 2011, and what's your assessment of how we're doing so far in 2012?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think this is a very important question. I think this is what people are actually talking about at Tim Hortons and other places.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Absolutely.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's certainly in every newscast around the province, and I think it does merit serious discussion, not only in terms of what has happened but what we think may happen and what others are saying.

In 2011, Ontario's real gross domestic product increased by 2.1%, following a gain of 3% in 2010. Business capital spending was a major contributor to growth in 2011. Remember, earlier today I talked about the heavy investment in new machinery and equipment. That accounted for more than half the total increase in GDP. Investment in machinery and equipment was particularly robust. It rose almost 18.7% last year, which is a very high level. Household consumption was also a major contributor, rising 2.3% last year.

Ontario's strong economic fundamentals and government actions to stimulate the economy have helped to promote recovery and create jobs. Employment increased last year by 1.8%, or 121,300 new jobs in the year 2011—the strongest annual advance since 2003.

Job creation remains solid so far in 2012, with the Ontario economy generating 28,500 net new jobs over the first six months of 2012. Full-time employment has been particularly robust, with over 55,500 net new Ontario jobs created over the period.

We've been hearing from around the world, and this is what people are actually talking about. They're worried about their job; they are worried about the state of the economy. There has been a market slowdown in most of the world in the last quarter. The first quarter of 2012,

we'll be reporting out those numbers very shortly. I think they'll continue with the trend of what we saw through most of 2011. However, the second quarter is when things started to change elsewhere.

At this point, all we have is anecdotal stuff from businesses and others. You talk to people in the coffee shops, you go in to a shop floor in your riding or my riding, and you will start to hear that people are more concerned about the future.

We know that growth has slowed in China, in the United States. We are very cognizant of the situation in Europe. In my last conversation with the governor of the Bank of Canada, he said that Canada will be insulated from whatever happens, to some extent, but we will not be immune to it. So there's uncertainty about that future, and I think we need to be poised to respond as best we can, just as we did in 2009. We ran this deficit; we made the investments in infrastructure to keep people working.

Candidly, at this point in time, we are not in as strong a position as we were. We come off three balanced budgets in a row and off of very robust growth, so we are in a period—not just Ontario, but virtually all of North America.

Interestingly, the other thing that's starting to happen—unfortunately, you're seeing the price of oil and natural gas coming down. That's going to mean less revenues for the provinces that have had very strong performance in the last few years, which helps all of Canada, including Ontario. So I'm very worried about that as well, and I think most analysts are.

The consensus estimate, I think, has come down in the last few weeks, but we took a very prudent approach in our budget with growth numbers, so we're still well within that, but I think—and again, this is what people are talking to me about. They're talking about the economy. They're talking about jobs. There are some bright spots. I talked about the auto sector. Again, unfortunately, auto production is up but there are fewer people building more cars. But it is still a bright light. Manufacturing has actually been fairly robust in the first half of—well, the first quarter is what we know with some certainty.

So there is a great deal of uncertainty. That's one of the reasons that we've taken a number of the steps we have to get ready in case that growth slips further. But I think analysts and commentators around the world, that's what they're talking about. That's what's important to people. That's what's important to working families here in Ontario. I think, again, if we work together we can weather this storm as well. I don't think it helps denigrating Ontario, saying that we're somehow second-rate, because we're not. The fact of the matter is, I pointed out just some of the quotes from outsiders and independent sources, including bond-rating agencies, who, while they recognize our challenges and have urged us to get back to balance, they also recognize the diversity and strength of this economy, and that, while we've had some difficult years as a result of circumstances well beyond the control of the government of Ontario, we will get back to where we were. In fact, jobs and GDP are ahead of where we

were when things went south, unlike the UK, unlike the United States. But there's still more to go and there's still considerable uncertainty and angst among economists, businesspeople and others out there.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My sense is, on the job front, that your comments really underscore the importance of making sure we have the right education and training initiatives so we have the right skills for jobs today and in the future, because we want the growth that we've seen happen to continue. So it has to very much align with our education and training strategy. I couldn't agree more that it is very unhelpful to have external negative comments on the economy when we're making, I think—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Sorry, what did I say?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Or Ontario.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Or Ontario, yes—when we are making progress in the context of some very difficult global fiscal realities. So thank you very much, Minister, for your answer.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ms. Sandals.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Yes, we're talking about pressures over which we don't have a lot of control, and that includes the weather. Certainly the other topic of conversation in southwestern Ontario, at least from your riding across to mine, has been the dry weather we've been having and what impact that could have on farmers. You mentioned earlier the Risk Management Program. I wonder if you could give us some more detail about what the government is doing to help farmers.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The 2011 budget announced a permanent extension of the pilot Risk Management Program for grain and oilseed farmers. The government has also developed a new Risk Management Program for cattle, hog, sheep and veal sectors, as well as a self-directed Risk Management Program for the edible horticulture sector. I think—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** The non-edible is flowers?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's flowers, yes. That refers to vegetables. Since 2003, our government—and that is truly a government word. The first time I saw that—but we have to use that to be, to your point, Liz, accurate.

Since 2003, our government has provided over \$2 billion in farm income stabilization programs. In addition, since 2003, investments of \$167 million for 418 rural economic development projects have generated over \$1.2 billion in new economic activity, creating and sustaining over 35,000 jobs.

It should also be noted that our federal government counterparts have not matched the Risk Management Program. We will continue to work with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture to urge them to do that. Again, the Ontario PCs voted against financial help for farmers and better roads for rural municipalities, both through the RIM program and a number of other budget initiatives.

The government has provided \$2.1 billion in ongoing support for Ontario farmers through farm income stabilization support programs, as I indicated earlier, from



2003-4 to 2010-11, including the Growing Forward suite of programs in partnership with the federal government, which are helping improve competitiveness and sustainability in the agricultural sector.

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Our government has also invested \$100 million in programming to support Ontario foods and continues to promote them through such initiatives as Foodland Ontario. The government has also launched programs to increase markets for local food producers through improved branding and marketing, and has made significant investments in research and innovation.

I think it's important to note that under the previous government, farmers were leaving their land because they were unable to earn a decent living. The PCs sat idly by while Ontario lost 1,000 farms per year, a decline of 25% in all jobs in agriculture in the province. It should also be noted that the former government cut \$164 million from the agriculture budget and closed 42 OMAFRA offices. There was, of course, no Buy Local strategy to support local Ontario food back then.

Our tax plan for jobs and growth, including the transition of the harmonized sales tax and corporate income tax cuts, benefits the agricultural sector. The HST will benefit Ontario farmers and help them compete with farmers in Quebec and the HST-charging provinces because they'll no longer pay sales tax on many items that are reimbursable in those other provinces. That's why I think we had a fairly positive response on the HST from groups like the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. We will continue to work with our rural partners as we go through what appears to be shaping up now to be a fairly difficult year, particularly in certain sectors.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Yes. Certainly the response to the HST with some of the agricultural community when they finally understood how it worked was actually quite positive.

Given the challenges we have, there has been some conversation in the farm community trying to understand the details of the Risk Management Program, and one of the things has been the issue of capping the funding. I wonder if you could explain the rationale for that. What's happening there?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** With agriculture being a shared federal-provincial responsibility, the federal government to date has not come to the table with any funding, or its fair share of funding, to support agri-food in Ontario. Ontario is again asking the federal government to support the province's farmers by funding its 60% share of the agricultural Risk Management Program. Without the support of the federal government, the province's demand-driven farm income support programs cannot be sustained in the long term, which includes the Risk Management Program. The Hudak PCs will not stand with us and ask their federal cousins to match our support for farmers through the Risk Management Program.

Given our province's fiscal challenges, the Ontario government will work with farmers to redesign the Risk Management Program to focus on supporting productiv-

ity while capping the program at a sustainable level. The commitment to support the program remains, capping it at up to a maximum of \$100 million in taxpayer support, net of any producer premiums.

Again, the federal government should be treating Ontario appropriately. They should be stepping up to the plate here. I'd ask the Legislature to unanimously urge the federal government to do that. Hopefully we will get a couple of inches of rain shortly—I am told time is of the essence now, certainly in some crops—and if not, we will be calling on the federal government to join us in assisting those agricultural sectors that are particularly hard hit by what appears to be shaping up as a difficult growing season.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** And I think it's important for people to understand that the traditional split in these support programs has been 60% federal, 40% provincial. That's the historic split. The fact that we've been paying 100% of this program presents a real challenge.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have to tell you, the other reason that I, as finance minister, was so taken with risk management is because, as I indicated in an earlier question, when there have been bad seasons, we've had to come in through contingency. Now we actually have instituted the principle of insurance here—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Exactly.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —which gives greater certainty to farmers, greater planning certainty to farmers—certainly more certainty that they will, at a minimum, recoup their losses. And it gives greater certainty to the government in terms of knowing that there is this fund that will help offset those losses. I think it just is good public policy to take—and by the way, farmers are contributing to this. This is an insurance program.

So we need a third partner, the federal government. We're happy to do our part. Farmers, to their enormous credit, were the ones who proposed this. As finance minister, this actually gives you greater planning certainty. You have to rely less on contingency in very bad years, because they're completely unpredictable.

So this, in my view, is the way to go, and my hope is that the federal government will join with us, and with the farmers who themselves are paying premiums for this insurance, and move to more of an insurance-based system.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I think it's a credit to the way the program is designed that when we piloted it with grains and oilseeds, the other sectors came to the table and said, "We want risk management too."

You mentioned edible horticultural. The non-edible horticulture sector is looking at this and saying, "This is the way to go," too, as you well know. I think that—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to have to stop you there. There can't be a question, but it was a good—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** No, it was just to wrap up. I think that the support that we've gotten from the agriculture sector and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is a

testimony to the fact that this is the way the program needs to work and we need the feds to be a partner.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We are now in our last one hour. Each group will have the last 20 minutes. Govern yourselves accordingly. It's now the—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Chair.

I just want to relate a few facts, Minister.

In 2003, the provincial debt: \$125 billion, give or take. In 2011, the provincial debt: \$260 billion. In other words, I look at the stats and I say, you know what? It only took 37 Parliaments and 145 years to accumulate a debt of \$125 billion, yet it took this government two terms, two Parliaments, to more than double the debt that, again, it took 37 Parliaments and 145 years in previous.

Minister, we've heard and read about the Moody's downgrading of Ontario's credit rating from AA1 to AA2. We know that a credit downgrade will impact interest rates and increase the costs of servicing the Ontario debt. This, of course, followed the previous day's decision—this is back on April 26—whereby Standard and Poor's reduced Ontario's credit outlook from stable to negative.

As you know, and as you've made quite clear, the Ontario PC Party voted against the Liberal budget. Sir, I recall in question period whereby, when this issue was brought to the attention of the Legislature, your comments were kind of like, "Well, yes, but don't worry about it. It's not as serious as you think it is." To me, you kind of fluffed it off.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** I don't remember him saying that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, I do, and you can check the Hansard for that. It increased the spending and it failed to take us off—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We voted against the budget—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Please, order.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We voted against the budget because it increased spending and failed to take us off the path to a \$30-billion deficit. We warned the government to take urgent action.

Then, of course, Ontario's credit rating by Moody's confirmed our fears. This was catastrophic news for Ontario. The consequences of this are very real and they're very troubling for our province, because we know that this will drive up interest rates and increase the costs of servicing our \$280-billion debt, give or take. The point is that for every percentage increase in interest rates, it will in fact cost our government—or rather, it will cost the taxpayers of Ontario—\$500 million, money that didn't have to be spent had things been handled properly. So, again, it's a caution. They're kind of throwing it our way.

That's \$500 million that could have paid for 1,200 first-year elementary teachers, 8,700 first-year nurses or 250,000—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I don't see the humour in this, Minister—250,000 MRI exams. So more than ever right

now we need to take urgent action to get our debt crisis under control. Only then can we ensure that Ontario is the economic engine and the leader of the federation once again.

Minister, I'm getting to a question here for you. Ontario has already suffered numerous credit downgrades since you introduced your last budget. Confidence in this government's management of the economy is at an all-time low. What is your plan in the event of further credit downgrades? How will you change direction, sir?

1510

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We laid out the plan in the budget. Let me address some of the so-called statements. First of all, I take the debt very seriously. I refer you to Instant Hansard and what I said this morning. You took the \$500-million figure that I put on the table here today. I have said in the Legislature, I have said in speeches, I have said in the print media that in fact Ontario does have a debt challenge. We need to get that under control, but let's put this into some context.

Every major government in the western world, save and except those governments that have an abundance of oil and gas, have faced similar, comparable numbers, including the government of Canada, whose debt has almost doubled in the last 10 years, including the European Union, including the United States.

In US states, in many instances they don't have the constitutional or legal authority to run deficits. What's happening there: You've got the federal government spending money to stimulate the economy and state and local governments laying off teachers, laying off firefighters. You have close to 200 municipalities in the United States on the verge of bankruptcy. You have a number of municipalities in the United States right now that can't meet their pension obligations. We are meeting our pension obligations. When you look at—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** A \$15.3-billion deficit, Minister. That's the concern that we have, sir.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You know, I listened carefully: You just said a minute ago we're having a \$30-billion deficit, which is pure fiction. It never even approached \$30 billion, it is nowhere near \$30 billion, and it is now at approximately, we're projecting for this year, \$15 billion, and we're not at the end of it. So quit throwing out false numbers.

We have met our deficit targets and have stuck with our original plan in terms of balancing since we first laid it out in 2010. No, I will not close schools and fire teachers. I know you want to do that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We didn't say that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, you have.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Now, you're putting words in our mouth, Minister. We are not saying that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You have no choice but to do that. You don't understand the numbers. If you listen carefully, 55 cents of every dollar we spend is spent on teachers; it is spent on firefighters and policemen; it is spent on public servants; it is spent on doctors; it is spent



on the people who provide the front-line services; it's spent on meat inspectors, water inspectors.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Minister, we're concerned about future downgrades.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We saw what your government did in Walkerton. We will not let that happen.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Point of order, Chair.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I am responding—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** On a point of order, yes, Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We exercised restraint when we were listening to the Liberal Party addressing the minister, and I would ask for the same courtesy, that they exercise the same restraint as we are in fact addressing the minister.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I would ask all members to—Mr. Nicholls has the floor. Give him the courtesy of asking his questions.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was trying to answer a question, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** He was misleading—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Wait a minute.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Dhillon, you cannot use that word in this committee the same way as you cannot say that in the House, so I would ask you to withdraw that.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I withdraw, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You cannot accuse a member of that. All right. It has been withdrawn.

Mr. Nicholls has the floor, and he is entitled to ask the questions. The minister is entitled to answer them as he sees fit. But please try to speak one at a time and show each other courtesy. I think that's the only way we're going to get through this last hour.

Mr. Nicholls, you have the floor.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, again, our concern, and I'm sure it's your concern as well, is that we don't want to have a further credit downgrade, because you know as well as we know that it's going to cost the Ontario taxpayer severely. Again, if in fact there is a credit downgrade, I guess my question to you, sir, is, what are you going to cut? Where is that \$500 million going to come from?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, the \$500 million could occur without a credit downgrade if interest rates go up, therefore the yield that we pay on our borrowing goes up. So make sure you understand where that number comes from. It doesn't necessarily have to come from a credit downgrade, so let's make sure we're dealing in facts.

The second point I would make is that our credit rating from Moody's, for instance, was brought down, but Moody's still has us double-A. My bigger concern at this point is that we meet our fiscal targets, which we have been. The deal with OECTA is an indication of the government's ability to come to terms with this.

I would say this: The federal government has run huge deficits, record deficits, record debt, as have a number of other provinces. Quebec's debt is high as well. Alberta, Saskatchewan—absolutely, they're doing very well. God bless them, it's important to the country. And, God bless them, they have oil and natural gas in abundance. They don't rely on manufacturing. They're going to start to run into some challenges now because of the price of oil, because of the price of potash. Growth in China, which is a key consumer of potash, has gone down, much lower than was originally projected.

Those provinces do have an abundance.

I would also remind you that Standard and Poor's gave us no change, DBRS kept us stable, and all had positive comments about the fiscal plan and where we're going.

These are challenging times. They are not brought about by the actions of this government any more than the federal challenges were brought about by the actions of the federal government. In my view, and I think the view of thoughtful analysts who are less interested in making political statements than they are in dealing with the reality of the problem, they have been brought about by a cataclysmic decline in the economy, second only to the Great Depression, where we did exactly what the federal government asked us to do, what the OECD recommended governments do, where the IMF said—and that is, we invested I think a little more than 2%, in stimulus, of our gross domestic product.

The deficit did peak at \$19 billion. It is down to \$15 billion right now and it is continuing its downward track. This plan we laid out was laid out in the 2010 budget. We have achieved each of the targets. In fact, in each of the years that we have gone through now, the deficit has come in lower than we projected in that original plan.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** But the debt has doubled, sir.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The debt has not, nor has the Canadian debt, nor has the debt of the United Kingdom, of France, Italy, Spain, the United States of America. It has happened in every industrialized country, the countries that have been spared it. You can try to say that we're the only guys facing this; we're not. It's simply not the case.

You have a different plan. You say we've got a deficit and debt and you have pledged to cut taxes more. If you're going to pay down the deficit—the first thing you've got to do to stem the debt is start paying down the deficit. You plan to cut taxes, and somehow, magically, that's going to fix things. It won't, and that's why your government left a hidden \$5.5-billion deficit when they left office in spite of the fact that, through most of the period they governed, the growth rate in the United States of America and the western world was over 5%, real.

I categorically reject the notion that Ontario is the only government faced with this. I categorically reject the notion that—and by the way, our government balanced three budgets in a row before the downturn, three budgets in a row, and our credit rating and our bonds are still selling very well. The credit adjustments that we got this

year were far fewer and far less than many other comparable jurisdictions.

I would urge you to quit denigrating Ontario. I think we have a great and strong economy, and this government was re-elected after the downturn. The people of Ontario support our investments—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** After the downturn, Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —in education and health care, with respect, and we have laid out a clear, consistent plan that will get us back to balance. It is an ambitious plan, I guarantee. I grant you that. But it is one that we will meet. We have met it up until now, and I have great confidence—and this province still is the engine of the Canadian economy, with all due respect. It is still the driver of the Canadian economy and is by far the largest economy. It has the most corporate headquarters, the highest employment, the best rates of growth in large part—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thirty-seven Parliaments, 145 years, a \$125-billion debt, and in eight years—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, and it doubled between 1990 and 1995 and it went up 40% between 1995 and 2003. You know what? We have to change the culture.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Maybe one of the things that we need to do, sir, is to stop spending.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Then why would you cut taxes further right now? Why would you cut corporate taxes further at this point?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Maybe it's about managing—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Are you guys fighting over taxes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, because we took your good advice, Gilles, and we froze the corporate tax rate. But you can't have it both ways. You can't say—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** One of the things, Minister, that we have suggested in our white paper is that wages and benefits make up a huge portion of this government's expenditures.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, why haven't you taken our advice and implemented a real public sector wage freeze, then?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I addressed that this morning. If we follow your advice, we'll lose in court and we won't achieve what we need to. That was in my opening comments in response to a question I had. I'd refer you to what happened in British Columbia. I'll refer to you—I forget how many lawsuits the federal government is confronted with right now as a result not of a wage freeze, but they voted, I think, a 1.5% increase and froze it at that.

1520

We've been able to negotiate. It's not just about a wage freeze. Your party has been conspicuously silent on benefits, on pensions and on everything else. So a wage freeze, frankly, doesn't get us to where we need to be. It's got to be real zeros, and your plan, not only would it not survive a court challenge, it doesn't really get us to where we need to be.

I want to applaud OECTA and others who have worked with us. We've been able to reach agreements that none of us—that aren't the best agreements; we're in difficult times. I think that's the right approach to this.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The Working Families Coalition as well, sir. You forgot to mention them.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I don't know anything about the Working Families Coalition. What I do know is that we've been able to achieve a much better outcome with OECTA than we would if we simply tried to do what previous governments have done, which, by the way, now would not survive the test of a court. For instance, the social contract: Today, even if a government wanted to do a social contract, it likely wouldn't survive a court challenge. The policy put forward by your leader and your party would not survive that. British Columbia is the test case there.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I find it a little surprising when you say you don't know anything about the Working Families Coalition—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The courts found that. Everybody did. You know, you've tried every which way, and you know—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, we certainly do know that it's out there. Your government's been in power now for eight years—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's not what the court says. That's not what the Chief Electoral Officer says. It's been tested.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Why haven't you done anything to reform the labour laws in Ontario, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We think we have a fine balance in the labour laws. In the most recent budget, I have announced some proposals to enhance the accountability and timeliness of arbitration laws. We have, in fact, enhanced health and safety rules in this province. We think that those are important strides forward. We don't think that health and safety is something that should be lightly taken. We have increased our authority to police health and safety—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, for the record, we don't think that health and safety rules should be lightly taken either. I don't want you to imply that that's what we are saying.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, but you're proposing to gut Ontario's—that's labour law. You asked me about labour law; that's labour law. That's the Ministry of Labour.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We believe that some of those laws—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We don't agree with you. We don't agree with your prosperity—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** —require reforming.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And by the way, we also tried to reform the arbitration with things that we lifted right out of your campaign platform, and you voted against them in the budget. I mean, you can't have it both ways. You say that we're not doing what you want us to, but on the arbitration side, we put things in that came right out



of your campaign document, and then you voted against them.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm sure you've heard of the scandal that plagued the Toronto District School Board because of its sole-sourced contracts with corrupt unions. Doesn't this lead you to believe, though, that maybe labour policy in the province is flawed?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, just get rid of them. That's what you guys are suggesting.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No, we're not suggesting that.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I believe that unions have made an enormous contribution to this society. I believe our standard of living is, in part, where it's at because there have been unions. Do labour laws, from time to time, need to be updated and revamped? Absolutely. Should we completely leave the playing field between employer and employee uneven? No. It is a balance to walk, I agree, and from time to time, I guess—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So labour laws should be looked at and maybe updated?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not the way you're proposing to, no. But I do agree, and we have looked at the Labour Relations Act over time. Governments of every political stripe have made changes to it to adjust to new realities. We would not have gotten the deal with Chrysler and General Motors had it not been that we worked with the unions, who were able to convince their members that this was in everybody's interest. I give Mr. Lewenza and the CAW credit for that.

I believe that workers need good representation in the workplace. I believe some workers are particularly vulnerable. So, no, I don't agree with you. I think unions are important. I think a strong union movement is part of a strong society. I think it brings balance. I don't agree with those who say unions are bad or inherently bad. In fact, as I say and I'll state again, I believe that they've done much to improve the standard of living of average Ontarians.

So, are there challenges? Absolutely.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Do you think that hard-working union members' dues should go to a political cause that they don't believe in?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll leave that up to them to determine.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Do you think, maybe, they should be forced to volunteer for candidates running for your party, under a threat that if they don't, they'll lose their jobs?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** That's not even worth responding to.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, I'm not going to respond to that. That's just nonsense.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can't. I can't.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You've only got a minute left. This is not something that deals with finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, that has nothing to do with finance, by the way. That's Ministry of Labour.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, I think it does have something to do with it, because we're talking dollars and cents here.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think the Navistar workers in your riding were well served by the CAW. If people like you had stood up the way the CAW did to protect their interests, things might have gone differently.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I take offence to that comment, Minister—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, you should. I take offence to your lack of action.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:**—because I have stood up for those workers in Chatham.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, you did not—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, I have—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:**—and now you want to strip whatever rights they have.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I've spoken with Mr. Lewenza—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Had you spoken—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:**—I've spoken with Chicago, and I have stood up for those workers—for the record, Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Time's up?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Order, please. The time has now expired.

Mr. Bisson, your last 20 minutes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I was watching our poor translator, like you say, Chair. She threw her hands up at one point, and I don't blame her. We have a saying in French: foutre.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Meaning?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Never mind. It's not a swear word.

I'm just going to read into the record a series of questions that I want to table for the committee, for the minister to respond to. I don't need a response; I just want to read them into the record.

(1) Who will administer the ONTC pension benefit in the event of an ONTC closure? What are the legacy costs for those benefits?

(2) What is the unfunded liability of the ONTC pension plan? Does the government intend to fully fund the plan in the event of closure of the ONTC?

(3) Does the government intend to continue to fund the plan when there are no employees contributing to the plan?

(4) Does the government intend to provide new/refurbished equipment to the Polar Bear Express/Little Bear train service? If so, what would be the capital requirement to provide such equipment?

(5) What are the future capital requirement costs of maintaining the infrastructure on the Island Falls subdivision on an annual basis—in other words, the track going from Cochrane to Moosonee?

(6) What will be the operating subsidy for the continued operation of the Polar Bear/Little Bear service?

(7) Several bridges on the ONTC system require upgrades. What are the capital costs for those upgrades? Does the government intend to provide the capital for

these upgrades, either through funding or deducting it from the value of the assets on divestment?

(8) Currently, the ONTC motor coach division operates a commercial business with no government subsidy. Does the government intend to subsidize any future carriers to operate the current ONTC routes? What would be the cost of such a subsidy on an annual basis, and how long would the subsidy continue?

(9) The government has stated it will be providing an enhanced motor coach service upon the discontinuance of the Northlander. Can the government define “enhanced”? What type of motor coach equipment will be provided? Does the government intend to contribute to the purchase of this enhanced equipment?

(10) Currently, Ontera provides services in very low-populated areas. Will these communities continue to receive these communication services? Does the government intend to subsidize these services? What would be the annual costs of these subsidies?

(11) Currently, Ontera carries a debt. Will the buyer of the asset assume the debt, will it be assumed by the province, or will it be deducted from the purchase price?

(12) If communities are negatively affected by the sale of Ontario Northland or any part of its assets, will the government provide communities with a financial adjustment to offset those effects?

(13) What are the legacy costs for the benefits for the retirees and future retirees?

I want to give that to the committee so that we can have those questions answered; that would be good.

And considering I’ve only got 15 minutes left—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It’s 17.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Seventeen minutes left? Man, I did that two minutes faster than I expected.

We’ve already had our exchange. We’ll agree that you’re wrong and I’m right on the ONTC.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We won’t agree on that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And you’ll agree that I’m wrong and you’re right on the ONTC.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That’s right. That’s better.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. I was characterizing the argument.

I just want to get to ServiceOntario for a second, without going through the whole preamble. When do you expect that the privatization deal on ServiceOntario is going to be completed?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I’m going to get back to you on that, Gilles, because I’m not certain at this point. I don’t want to give you a date now that doesn’t come to pass. It’s very much in progress, and I don’t have the answer at this point.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes. I just want to know when—you said that the books will be balanced by 2017-18. Including this budget year, has the government slotted any revenue from the privatization of ServiceOntario into its fiscal framework?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I’m sorry; give me that again?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You say you’re going to balance by 2017-18. Within that period—this year, next year, and the

year after—have you slotted any of that revenue into your projections?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So you have. Okay. And how much in each fiscal year? I know you don’t have that at your fingertips.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I’ll get you that answer.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can you provide that? And how much, in broad terms, do you expect to slot into the fiscal framework for an upfront payment for privatization of ServiceOntario? For example, you got a whole bunch of money for Teranet, right? I think it was about a billion bucks or whatever it was. What do you expect to get upfront on that?

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I’ll get back to you, but the amount would be a net, less costs associated with whatever transaction happens.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. I take it that the upfront revenue from the privatization of ServiceOntario will be accounted in the same way that the Teranet one was.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can’t give you an answer to that right now. It’ll depend on how the transaction proceeds.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You realize I’m doing these really quick because I’ve only got 14 minutes left, but I do want to get them into the record.

On pensions, you talked about jointly sponsored pension plans, and I’ll just read this part. The government stated in your budget that you would make changes to jointly sponsored pension plans; in your own words, “focus on ensuring that measures used to improve plan funding do not add to employer and taxpayer expense, beyond what has already been agreed to.”

You went on to say, “Following consultations, the government will introduce appropriate legislation to help achieve these objectives.”

I guess the question is, when do you expect that legislation to come forward?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Consultations are under way right now. I think at the time of the budget we were looking to this fall. I’m not sure that we’ll meet that target, but the consultations are going on right now.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. In your budget, you stated that the legislation would—“in case of a deficit, plans would be required to reduce future benefits or ancillary benefits before further increasing employer contributions.”

You went on to say a bunch of things. I’ll just read one: “Any benefit reductions would involve future benefits only,” blah blah blah. Does the—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I’d have to read the whole thing to ask that question. Sorry, I’ve got to do this.

“In exceptional circumstances, a limit would be set on the amount or value of benefit reductions before additional contribution increases could be considered.” You went on to say, “Any benefit reductions would involve future benefits only, not those that have already been



accrued. Current retirees would not be affected.” You went on to say, “Where employee contributions are currently less than employer contributions, increased employee contributions would also be available as a tool to reduce pension deficits.” Lastly, you said, “Where plan sponsors cannot agree on benefit reductions through negotiation, a new, third party dispute resolution process would be invoked.”

How far are the stakeholders in proposing any kind of legislation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We’re in the middle of those consultations now, Gilles, and we’ll be reporting out on those once they’re complete.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. The next one: On the consolidated public sector pension plan, the government intended “to introduce framework legislation in the fall of 2012 that would pool investment management functions of smaller public sector pension plans in Ontario. Under this framework, management of assets could be transferred to a new entity or to an existing large public sector fund. The government will appoint an adviser to develop the framework, working with affected stakeholders and building on Ontario’s internationally recognized model for pension plan management.”

The question is, is John Morneau the guy who is going to be the adviser?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Who?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** John Morneau.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Bill Morneau. He’s out meeting—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Bill Morneau is out meeting now. He’s in the middle of consultations with stakeholders.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Does the government intend to introduce legislation this fall on that particular item?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, that was our original intention. I’m going to wait to see the conclusion of his consultations to see what is involved legislatively. That was the intention; whether or not that occurs at this point, Gilles, I can’t give you a complete answer because I don’t know. That was the original intention, yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Do you plan to add other public sector plans such as WSIB and others into this?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We’re consulting on that very matter, including those organizations that might be included in it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How will the governance of this work in the end?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That’s part of the consultation. Again, the government hasn’t formed an opinion on that at this point. Mr. Morneau is going to be giving us advice on that matter and a number of other matters. But to your point, governance is an important consideration.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My good friend Michael Prue raised a question in the House way back last spring, I believe it was, in regard to the Trillium benefits.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You had at that point committed that you would be making some changes to the legislation. Can you tell us when that will be?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I indicated to Mr. Prue this morning that we’ve had a look at his private member’s bill and think it’s a very good approach to these matters. I’ve asked my officials to meet with Mr. Prue to give him a full briefing on the government’s thinking on this matter, and I think that’s going to happen in the next day or so, and then we’ll go from there. But I’ve had a look at Mr. Prue’s bill. I think what he has proposed is one very good way of dealing with this, and I do want him to have the benefit of a full briefing from my officials on some of the things that are more, I guess, administrative in nature than they are policy-wise. But I thought his private member’s bill was an important step.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. How much time do I have left?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** About 10 minutes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My Lord, we’re having so much—you gave me a timer; that is very nice of you. Wow, talk about having friends.

I just wanted to get those particular questions on the record before we ran out of time, so let me get back to the gas plant. We started with it; let’s get back to it.

Part of the problem I think the public is having with this—and, I would probably argue, a number of us here—is that it’s fairly clear that the decision was made as a result of what was going on in the last election. We went through a whole series of questions in regard to at what point was a decision made, but I just want to be clear: The decision, as per what you had said earlier, when it came to the cancellation, was done as a promise by the Liberal Party that, should you be elected, that in fact the government would make these changes—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Prior to that election, no such discussion had been going on between the Liberal Party and the government? Was there a conversation going on before?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Before the election?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You presented background notes and so on where the issue was clearly—I indicated I think earlier that there were discussions in caucus, there were discussions in cabinet—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, the Liberal Party. Had your Liberal election team raised this with the government beforehand? Because some of the people are the same; you have members of caucus who were on that particular EPC?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not that I’m aware of, Gilles. I mean, do we talk about things amongst ourselves? Sure we do, like everybody else. The point is, there was no government decision taken prior to the election. There was an undertaking by the Ontario Liberal campaign, a campaign promise, if we were re-elected, if we had the privilege of governing again, that we would move to relocate the plant. The decisions that gave rise to the re-

location and the costs associated with that were taken subsequent to the election by the new government.

It's my recollection, Gilles, and I'm sure it's yours, that that issue was highly public. I know I heard, again, from members of our caucus, local mayors, councillors and other interested parties. A lot of businesses, by the way, were concerned that there be enough power in the western GTA. What kinds of conversations went on between various members of the campaign team we're also cognizant of—I can't relate to you what they were, but I'm sure some of them went on.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So there was some discussion between the election planning committee of the Liberal Party and government members in regard to—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Elected government members.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's what I'm saying.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The campaign promise was made, and subsequent to the election, the government began to take the steps necessary to implement the undertaking.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me be blunt with the question: Was it communicated to the government caucus or to the cabinet by the Liberal election planning committee prior to the election that this was a political problem, that they wanted it cancelled? Was that ever communicated?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not to my knowledge.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There were certainly discussions among, again, candidates, elected members who were running for re-election, the campaign committee, the media—I think there were editorials or there was lots of commentary—television, but there—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Had it been flagged? That's my question. Did the Liberal campaign flag this for the caucus or the government prior to the election?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No, but I think it's fair to say that a number of elected Liberals, candidates and others in the party, municipal leaders and so on, said that they felt this was going to be an issue to the campaign team. We were hearing the same thing you were, I'm sure, what was being widely reported in the media.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If it had not been for the election last fall, would the cancellation decision have been made, if there was no election last fall? Because it's pretty clear—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I suspect it would have been—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Would not or would have?

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Would have or would not?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Would have. I mean, it was pretty overwhelming, and the opportunity at Sarnia-Lambton presented itself. When the initial RFP, going way back, I think, to 2004 or 2005, went ahead, it was at a time when we didn't have enough installed capacity and so we moved very quickly on a number of new generating opportunities. It was a particular concern in the western GTA and in the northeastern part of the GTA, where not only did there have to be additional generation

opportunities at that time; there had to be improvements to the transmission. Remember there were fires out in the west end at certain hydro substations? With the downturn of the economy, with our conservation efforts, with the other supply we brought on, the urgency by 2011 was different, with all the new power we brought on, with the opportunity to build in Sarnia-Lambton, where there was a willing host municipality, a willing community, at that time.

So, to your specific question, had there not been an election, I suspect the same decision would have been made, and in about the same time frame.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If it was an issue before the election, why did the government not decide on their own, prior to the election, to cancel? Why did it take the election to make it happen?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It didn't take the election to make it happen. I just indicated to you that had there not been an election, I suspect probably a similar decision would have been arrived at.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But you can understand why I'm asking?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, part of it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Why was the timing of the decision October? Why was the timing not, you know—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, we decided that we wanted to respect the view of the people in Mississauga and Etobicoke. It was pretty overwhelming and compelling. So, as I say, we made an undertaking, the promise in the election, that if we were elected we would move to relocate the plant.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How much time? Time, Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Approximately four minutes, I think.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, let me just wrap up with this. I guess the difficulty in all of this is that what is clear by the evidence that we've seen up to now in the documents is that there had been controversy in regard to the siting of these particular plants for some time, so much so that we know there were conversations within the elected officials of the area bringing their concerns, as they should, to the government. That's what your job is. I don't take that away from what the members were trying to do. It was clear that there were briefings going on to the Premier as early as September of last year, before the election. In other words, a year, a full 12 months, before the election, the Premier and others were being briefed on the cost of cancellation.

What I guess it leads to is that the government had a whole bunch of time to make this decision. It could have made this decision in May of last year; it could have made this decision in August. Instead, the Liberal Party made a commitment during the election that, should they get re-elected, this thing would be cancelled should they form the government.

So you can understand why those out there like myself are saying that this was a political decision. It seems to me that if there was a need to reverse the decision for reasons that were whatever, the government could have



done that before the election quite easily, because it had all the information.

My sense is that the decision was partly made before the election, because, again, from the documents as we read them, the amount of money that it cost to settle this thing was starting to be known about in November. I can't believe that you can start having that kind of assuredness as to the number a mere 40 days after the election. You know as well as I do that to get your head around something as large as the cancellation of a contract as large as this—I don't care if it's private or public sector, guys; 40 days to come up with \$190 million as a settlement for the Mississauga plant is a bit of a stretch, to say that that entire thing was arrived at over a 40-day period after the election. So it's pretty clear there had been some work ahead of time to look at how much it was going to cost to get out of this.

From our perspective and I think from the perspective of others, this really does look like a political decision that at the end of the day left the taxpayer on the hook, at this point, for \$190 million, and who knows how much after? I just think it doesn't bode well on all of us as politicians, but specifically Mr. McGuinty and the Liberal government, for those types of decisions to be made in the way that they were.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. You're relinquishing your last minute?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, I've got, what, a minute?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I can tap dance and sing.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, no, don't tap dance. We'll be out of here a minute earlier.

Government side, last 20 minutes.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to get back to taxes, because we chatted earlier about what was happening with corporate taxes and the significance of harmonization, and then we talked about farmers. Of course, when I have the opportunity to sit down and I have someone coming in from my constituency—and I do represent a significant portion of seniors—they say, "That's all very well indeed, but what about me? What are you going to do in terms of helping on personal taxes?" I have a few tax questions, and I'll start with that one. What are we doing on the personal tax front?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's an important question because the moves we took—the government's tax plan for jobs and growth provides significant relief for Ontarians and their families. More than two thirds of consumers in Ontario with household incomes of \$90,000 and less are better off with the HST than they were with the old provincial sales tax.

Hudak has no plan to offset his proposed HST reductions; he wants to make reckless cuts to revenue during a time of economic uncertainty, which will affect jobs and growth. That being said, Tim Hudak, at the Economic Club of Toronto, spoke in favour of the HST,

saying, "I [agree] that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate sets of taxes and policies and collect two separate groups of sales taxes." It seems as though he is uncertain of his own position.

In 2013, the HST will save consumers some \$490 million. It was reported by Michael Smart that two thirds of sales tax savings to businesses from the HST have been reflected in lower prices to Ontario consumers.

Also, the tax package will create 600,000 jobs for Ontarians. When the Horwath NDP voted against the comprehensive tax package, they in fact voted against those 600,000 jobs, \$12 billion in tax relief for Ontarians and families and the 90,000 Ontarians who are no longer paying personal income tax.

Along with the enhanced tax system, our government is providing relief for Ontarians who are in need of support. The total tax relief for Ontarians between cuts and credits is valued at \$12 billion over three years. Today, nine out of 10 taxpayers are paying less income tax, and the average Ontario family is receiving an income tax cut of \$355 this year and every year going forward. Also, there's a permanent \$260 sales tax credit for every low- and middle-income adult and child in the province.

To help families, farms and small businesses manage the cost of turning on more clean power, the government implemented the Ontario clean energy benefit, which takes 10% off electricity bills, including tax, through to December 31, 2015, for the period starting September 1, 2012. Finally, the northern Ontario energy benefit provides support of up to \$200 per family and \$130 per single person.

These annual tax credits provide significant relief for Ontarians and help to further strengthen our economy.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thanks. Part of the challenge though, is, what does it all mean? How does it all come together? When you strengthen the tax system, what does it mean for the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It means we have a more progressive tax system, that middle- and lower-income Ontarians are in fact paying less taxes. It means we have the most generous sales tax credit. It means that our businesses are no longer being held to compliance by two different tax departments both on corporate taxes and personal taxes. It means that 90,000 fewer low-income Ontarians are paying tax.

It also means we now have the lowest tax rate on the first \$37,000 of income. That's important because not only does it benefit the working poor; it also helps reduce, I think, what my officials call the welfare wall. It makes it easier for people to move off of welfare and into the workforce when jobs are available. That's an important public policy consideration as well.

It means a more progressive tax system. It means lower taxes for people of more modest means. It means a fairer and more transparent tax system.

It means businesses now have a competitive tax structure. We're certainly not the highest; we're not the lowest. When you look at the OECD, we're about the

middle of the range. That gives us an incredible leg up in terms of attracting new jobs and new investment.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** In the House, we had an awful lot of discussion about the home renovation tax credit. I know that people were suggesting it was elitist, that it was aimed at a particular group of folks, as opposed to actually what, in fact, it could do. Like most things, it's a part of the bigger piece, right? It's not just the piece, it's a part of the bigger piece. So you need a variety of options and choices in order for people to move forward.

1550

Here we have an aging at home strategy, a demographic that's going to take us out to a significant elderly population. I'm getting there myself. That home renovation tax credit is really an important part of this. I wonder if you could share some information in terms of how it has a broader impact and effect.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** You're absolutely right. The government's stated policy is to help people stay at home longer, and oftentimes that involves substantial renovation costs. Many of our seniors—I know in your riding there were many homes built in the postwar period for young families, husbands returning from war. They weren't built to today's design standards. There are stairs, there are narrow doorways, small bathrooms that make it hard to get a walker in and out of, all those kinds of things.

In order to facilitate people staying at home—it's one thing to help provide a nurse to come in and provide care periodically, or a homemaker to come in, but you've also got to make the physical changes to the house. This is designed to help seniors with that.

Just some of the technical details about it, so people who are listening can find out: The healthy homes renovation tax credit will help improve accessibility and help seniors with mobility at home. The credit would allow seniors the opportunity to renovate their homes to ensure their safety and suit their changing lifestyle needs. Also, the tax credit would help seniors stay in their homes longer and relieve pressure on long-term-care costs, so there is what the economists and my officials call a cost avoidance.

Oftentimes it's hard to see cost avoidances in a government's budget or in financial statements because that's precisely what it is: an avoided cost. Ten years from now, more people are in their homes; the rate of spending on long-term care will be lower than it would have otherwise been. But you can only make projections on that, and it's hard to see.

The tax credit will cost the province some \$60 million in 2011-12, which would be offset by savings in business support activities and related expenditures. In my view, it makes good public sense.

I think of my own mom and dad and their last years in their home. They had to make a lot of changes to their house to accommodate walkers and so on, as I'm sure many of us have experienced with our moms and dads and other family members. It would have made it a little

bit easier; this does that. It complements our aging at home strategy, the initiatives Minister Matthews is taking with respect to improved home care services, and I think just makes good sense.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you. Obviously I agree, because I know from—again, I'm going to quote my own constituency. People want to stay at home. The last place they want to go if they don't have to is into a long-term-care residence or a retirement home when they can stay in their own home. And that's what we want. That's what I would like to be able to do in the future. These types of initiatives allow us to be able to do that.

I think there are a whole host of things—I remember publishing the list of available opportunities, whether it was through the tax structure or through a renovations tax structure, to enable people to do this.

As we get older, and there are a lot more of us, this is really important. So I want to say thank you again for this, whoever came up with this idea.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm not sure if it was you or Deb Matthews who told me that oftentimes what lands a senior citizen in long-term care isn't an underlying chronic condition; it's a fall, something like a fall.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** At home.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, at home. So to the extent that we can help seniors renovate their homes to be more accommodating and reduce the risk of a fall—the other statistic that I was quite astounded by is the number of seniors who, if they fall and break their hip and go to the hospital, don't come out.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** That's right.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's really quite frightening. Something like this, I think, is a modest step but it will help people. And it builds to your point: Part of the suite of policies and programs that we've brought about helps them, and, by the way, it helps the treasury because it's less costly. People are happier. I'm glad we've had the opportunity to do this.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** And you're right. The SmartRisk foundation did an analysis; I believe it was for Health Canada and the insurance industry. In fact—and it's primarily women—if they fall and they go from being totally independent to dependent, it changes their status. But first of all, if they fall and they continue to fall at the rate they are, we will be building hospitals just to accommodate their falls. That's unacceptable. So prevention is absolutely critical and mobility is the biggest. Working with a CCAC that can eliminate things like the RUGs, adding this tax credit that gives them the opportunity to do the widening or to be able to move efficiently, is exactly what we need to be able to do. It's good stuff. Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Dhillon.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Minister, can you discuss the Ring of Fire and why it is so important to the Ontario economy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Ring of Fire is an area in the James Bay lowlands in northern Ontario where there has been intense recent mineral exploration. The area has



large potential deposits of important minerals such as chromite, nickel, copper, zinc, platinum group elements and gold. The discovery of chromite, which is a key ingredient in the production of stainless steel, is particularly promising. The Ring of Fire has the potential to be the most significant source of chromite in North America and thus represents an opportunity for both exports of chromite or an increasing value-added production here in Ontario.

Mining development promises significant investment and job creation in northern Ontario in both the direct mining and support activities, as well as value-added industries which can process the minerals. Cliffs Natural Resources' chromite mine and mill development, as well as the construction and operation of transportation infrastructure, could create 750 jobs plus hundreds of indirect employment opportunities for northern Ontarians and First Nations communities. A ferrochrome processing facility in Capreol is expected to employ some 450 people during construction and as many as 450 people when the facility is in operation. The proposed mine developments in the Ring of Fire are expected to create more than 1,500 permanent jobs, while additional jobs will be created in the mining service and supply sector. It's a priority of our government to strengthen our economy by creating jobs for Ontario families.

It's important to note that Andrea Horwath and the NDP's protectionist proposals would put the northern economy at risk. The NDP platform called for an end to all development north of the 51st parallel, which would effectively cancel the Ring of Fire. The NDP would kill northern jobs by shutting Ontario to mining and resource investments from other provinces or countries.

Ontario will work closely with First Nations to ensure that they are partners in this development. The province is committing to a First Nations' dialogue focusing on long-term environmental monitoring, socio-economic and community development, regional infrastructure and resource revenue-sharing. Ontario is calling on the federal government to work with Ontario and First Nation communities to advance the work.

While our government sees the development of northern Ontario as a critical step to further strengthening the Ontario economy, others have a different view of the north. Tim Hudak has committed that, if he is elected, he will eliminate the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Also, when Mr. Hudak was Minister of Northern Development and Mines, he moved ministry offices from the north to Toronto.

Our government has also recently launched the 25-year growth plan for northern Ontario to strengthen the economy by diversifying traditional resource-based industries, stimulating new investment and entrepreneurship, and nurturing new and emerging sectors. The 2010 budget announced \$45 million over three years for a new project-based skills training program to help northerners and aboriginal peoples participate in and benefit from emerging economic development opportunities such as the Ring of Fire. The program will also help build

capacity in the north to gather information to support community land use planning and environmentally sustainable development that benefit aboriginal peoples and Ontario as a whole.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you, Minister. Can you please discuss what's been done to assist the northern communities with their new and unique challenges?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our government recognizes the unique challenges faced by northern communities. In fact, responding to some of these challenges has been one of the government's key objectives for the Ontario municipal partnership fund. The northern and rural communities grant of the Ontario municipal partnership fund was specifically designed to assist northern communities.

Northern communities also benefit from a variety of grants which serve to assist municipalities and rural communities with their unique challenges. Social programs grants assist municipalities with their social program costs, if they have limited property tax assessment and high social program costs relative to their residence household incomes; an equalization grant provides funding to municipalities with limited property assessment; police services grants provide funding to rural communities to support policing costs.

#### 1600

In 2012, municipalities across the province are also receiving \$15 million in transitional assistance.

In recognition of the new challenges faced by northern communities, the province continues to provide them with a higher guaranteed level of support compared to the rest of the province. In 2012, the province guarantees that northern municipalities will receive a combined benefit of OMPF and provincial uploads that is at least equal to 95% of their 2011 support. As a result, municipalities in the north are receiving more than \$239 million through the Ontario municipal partnership fund in 2012, which translates into \$655 per household, nine times the average of the rest of the province. In addition, the province will continue to honour its commitment regarding the uploads as agreed upon with municipalities through the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review in 2008.

The government understands the importance of this commitment to its municipal partners. Northern municipalities will see an estimated benefit of \$98 million in 2012 resulting from these uploads. The Ontario municipal partnership fund's combined benefit with the provincial uploads will result in \$336 million for northern municipalities in 2012. This represents an increase of \$83 million, or 33%, over funding provided by the previous Conservative government.

It should also be noted that in 2010, the government introduced a new permanent northern Ontario energy credit that provides assistance to low- to middle-income Ontarians living in the north with the higher energy costs they face. Eligible northern residents can receive an annual credit of up to \$137 per single person and up to \$210 per family, including single parents, for 2012.

To support industry in the north, our government also developed the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate program. Our government recognizes the distinct requirements of regional economies. In support of northern development, we have expanded the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. to \$100 million from \$60 million a year in 2003 to help build strong, prosperous northern communities. Since 2003, the northern Ontario heritage fund has supported some 4,400 projects, leveraged \$2.4 billion in additional contributions, and created or sustained some 17,800 direct jobs in the north. The PCs, on the other hand, used the NOHFC as a slush fund. They funded golf tournaments and other pet projects in ridings that were not considered to be in northern Ontario. Our government has a strong track record of development and support in northern Ontario, and we will continue to enhance the north and the entire Ontario economy.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Two minutes. Ms. MacCharles.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question is about the electricity sector and its impact on our economy.

Just some context for my question, if I may: Like, I think, many of my colleagues, I work with other MPPs on a regional basis, a non-partisan basis, on what the issues and opportunities are—in Durham region, in my case. Probably the number one topic has to do with energy and the electricity sector. Of course, Durham—and I think I discussed this at estimates before—is seeing itself very much as an energy belt, going forward, in terms of nuclear energy as well as balancing that with renewable.

There's lots of discussion about that in Durham, and elsewhere, I'm sure, with the sector itself as well as boards of trade, and with our universities and colleges in Durham who are modelling much of the curricula around this topic. So I sense it's a pretty important part of our economy, going forward, and am wondering, Minister, if you could speak to the impact of this sector on the province's economy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The electricity sector is a critical component of the Ontario economy, accounting for over \$16 billion in economic activity.

When our government took office in 2003, we inherited a system that had no long-term plan. There was not enough generation to meet demand reliably. Transmission lines were aging and some assets were in poor condition. Ontario relied heavily on coal-fired generation, which causes pollution. For years, health experts have been urging governments to shut down coal plants because doing so would drastically improve air quality and public health, and save money on hospital visits.

Ontario is on track now to phase out coal-fired electricity by 2014. The government has already shut down 10 coal-fired units, with only six units remaining.

It's also important to highlight that public and private investments in clean and renewable energy have increased as a result of the Green Energy and Green Economy Act of 2009. So far, the province has created more than 20,000 clean energy jobs and is on track to create a total of 50,000 jobs. The government's long-term energy

plan will help build a clean, modern and reliable electricity system. Provincial policies promoted investments of \$13 billion in electricity infrastructure and added over 9,000 megawatts of new capacity to the system.

In addition to producing clean energy, Ontario's Feed-In Tariff program is building a thriving clean energy economy. The review of the Feed-In Tariff program was an opportunity to hear from Ontarians about how to strengthen the program and has led to changes that build on its success.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that, I'm going to—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Are we out of time?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We're out of time. We have now finished the estimates portion and we must go straight to the vote, or votes. There are a great number of them.

We are now required to vote on the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Finance. We have nine votes to take place.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I want recorded votes on all of them.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We have a request for a recorded vote on all of them. All right.

The first one is, shall vote 1201 carry? That relates to the ministry administration program. Shall vote 1201 carry?

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Shall vote 1202 carry? That relates to taxation, agencies and pensions policy program.

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That vote carries.

Shall vote 1203 carry? This relates to economic, fiscal, and financial policy program.

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.



**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That vote carries.

Shall vote 1204 carry? This relates to financial services industry regulation program.

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Carried.

Shall vote 1206 carry? This relates to central agencies information and information technology cluster program.

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That vote carries.

Shall vote 1208 carry? This relates to investing in Ontario program.

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That vote carries.

Shall vote 1209 carry? This relates to tax and benefits administration program.

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That vote carries.

Shall the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Finance carry? Do you want it recorded on this, as well?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Recorded vote, okay.

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Carried.

Shall I report the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Finance to the House?

**Ayes**

Cansfield, Dhillon, MacCharles, Sandals.

**Nays**

Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I shall then report to the House.

That completes our consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Finance.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** If I may, I wondered if we could have a 10-minute break.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I was just going to suggest it. I don't know about a 10, but I would prefer—

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Ten.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** A request for a 10-minute recess. I think, after this long day, that's very much in order. We will await the arrival of the Minister of Health.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much.

*The committee recessed from 1610 to 1625.*

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We will proceed with the consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, which was selected for a total of 7.5 hours of review.

The ministry is required to monitor the proceedings for any questions or issues that the ministry undertakes to address. I trust that the deputy minister has made arrangements to have the hearings closely monitored with respect to questions raised, so that the ministry can respond accordingly.

If you wish, you may, at the end your appearance, verify the questions and issues being tracked by the research officers.

I now call vote 1401. We will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minutes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Chair, I have a motion.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Harris has a motion. Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I move that the Standing Committee on Estimates (herein “the committee”), under standing order 110(b), stating that “each committee shall have power to send for persons, papers or things,” directs the Minister of Health as well as the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and eHealth Ontario to produce, no later than August 29, 2012:

All documentation, including invoices, receipts, contracts, agreements, policies and correspondence related to “fixed fee contractors” that have been paid or hired by eHealth Ontario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care from June 1, 2009, to July 19, 2012;

All briefing notes and correspondence, in any form, electronic or otherwise, that has occurred between Minister of Health Deb Matthews, including her political staff, and Assistant Deputy Minister David Hallett, including his staff subordinates, related to salaries and compensation for eHealth Ontario employees;

All documentation, including invoices, receipts and correspondence, related to eHealth Ontario’s dealing with the companies Ajilon, Modus, Procom and Corporate Traveler;

All documentation, including invoices and receipts, related to all expenses for Ms. Alice Keung, Mr. Frank Work, Ms. Kala Balasubramanian, and Mr. Ray Hession.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We have a motion made by Mr. Harris.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Mr. Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Before the vote, I request a 20-minute recess, please.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes. Let’s just see if there’s any debate first.

Is there any debate on this motion? Any debate on the motion?

Seeing no debate, then, the 20-minute recess is in order, is granted, and we’ll see everybody back here in 20 minutes.

*The committee recessed from 1628 to 1646.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Meeting resumed. It has been agreed by all members that we can proceed two minutes before the 20-minute period is up, all members being present.

We have a motion duly moved by Mr. Harris. Everybody need it read back? Everybody has a copy in front of them?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We have a request for a recorded vote.

**Ayes**

Bisson, Harris, Jackson, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** All those opposed? That carries. The motion having been made, the clerk will make sure that the ministry gets this.

We will now proceed to the order—we will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minute by the minister,

followed by statements of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition and the third party. Then the minister will have up to 30 minutes for a reply. The remaining time will be apportioned equally amongst the three parties.

Minister, the floor is yours. You have up to 30 minutes, if you wish to use it.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Chair, may I just confirm that we will be stopping at 5 o’clock?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We will be stopping precisely at the stroke of the bell, 5 o’clock. So if you do decide you want to use your 30 minutes, you would use some today and the remainder on Monday.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee and members of the public, I’m very pleased to be here today to speak with you. This is my third appearance before this committee as Minister of Health, where I have the privilege of working to improve the health of Ontarians and to safeguard and strengthen the publicly funded health care system we all cherish.

Our health care system is facing unprecedented challenges. As you all know, since the global economic downturn in 2008, Ontario’s economy has been through a few very turbulent years, and the global situation remains uncertain to this day.

Ontario’s economy is still closely linked to the US economy, which continues to recover slowly from the recession. Over the next several years, Ontario’s economy is expected to grow at a modest pace.

Despite challenging economic times, our government remains committed to ensuring that vital health services remain in place, and we continue to plan for the future of health care.

Since 2003, our government has made much-needed investments in public services, among them, health care. Funding for health care has grown at an average of 6.1% annually since our government took office, and those increases were put to good use, improving access for patients and the quality of care they receive.

I’m proud of how far we’ve come over the past nine years, working together with our valued partners. Today, there are 3,400 more doctors, 12,600 more nurses and 1,000 more nurse practitioners than there were in 2003. We’ve reversed the physician brain drain. Last year, we licensed a record number of doctors.

Our initiatives have led to increased undergraduate enrolment in medical schools, expanded family medicine postgraduate positions, increased rural and remote clinical education opportunities for medical students, the opening of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, and the opening of satellite medical campuses in Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo, St. Catharines and Mississauga.

We’ve doubled the number of residency spots for international medical graduates, and our province now offers more training positions and assessments for IMGs each year than all other provinces combined.



We've fulfilled our commitment to create 200 family health teams and have introduced nurse practitioner-led clinics in communities across the province.

All of these initiatives mean that more than two million more Ontarians are attached to primary care than in 2003.

We've also been promoting new approaches to health care delivery, including the use of physician assistants, nurse practitioners and others to help meet patient needs. These professionals are working hard as part of health care teams across the province to reduce wait times and improve access to care in hospitals, community health centres, long-term-care homes, nurse practitioner-led clinics and family health teams. We want all our health care professionals—nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, midwives and others—to be working to their full scope of practice.

Our government is ensuring that Ontarians are benefiting from 21st-century technology, starting with the technology used in hospitals and doctors' offices. Our plan to integrate the system by having an electronic medical record for every Ontarian is well on its way. Nine thousand physicians are participating, representing nine million Ontarians, en route to our goal of an EHR for every Ontarian by 2015.

Medications for seniors now appear onscreen in all Ontario emergency rooms and 20 community health centres. Some 144,400 remote medical consultations took place through telemedicine in 2011-12, providing access to care for people close to home, and 80,000 Ontarians are in a pilot project for e-prescribing.

eHealth is improving patient care across Ontario in other ways, too. Through eHealth, patients can get better access to health care services in their own communities, with shortened wait times for diagnostic test results, less duplicate testing and fewer unnecessary transfers.

eHealth Ontario provides funding to modernize the way in which physicians see and treat patients. With electronic medical records, or EMRs, providers can digitally record and store patient information. Less time spent on paperwork means more time with patients.

Other examples of eHealth initiatives include the electronic child health network, or ECHN, which gives health care providers access to accurate, up-to-date hospital-based information about a child whenever it is needed, and makes it possible to improve the quality of care that a child receives closer to home.

The emergency neurosurgery image transfer system, or ENITS, allows neurosurgeons to view remotely patients' neurological images across the province and make recommendations about their care. Since its inception in January 2009, ENITS has helped avoid several hundred patient transfers.

Since 2003, we've invested more than \$9 billion in health care infrastructure. We have new or expanded hospitals in west Parry Sound, Pembroke, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, Toronto, North Bay, Woodstock, Sarnia, Sioux Lookout and more. We have projects under construction in Niagara, London, Hamilton, Cornwall,

Halton, the GTA and beyond. This year alone, we're investing an additional \$1.4 billion to expand and redevelop our hospitals and for other capital projects.

We're redeveloping 35,000 long-term-care beds. Since 2003, we've added 9,000 new beds. Through our successful wait times strategy, we've cut key surgical wait times in half. In fact, I'm pleased to say that Ontario is once again the national leader in reducing wait times for five priority health services, according to a report issued by the Wait Time Alliance. For the fifth consecutive year, the alliance gave Ontario straight As for meeting performance targets and reducing wait times for hip replacements, knee replacements, cataract surgery, radiation oncology and cardiac services. Ontario was the only province to receive As in all five priority areas.

We've also been working on improving the quality of care patients receive with the Excellent Care for All Act.

All hospitals now publish quality improvement plans, and the compensation of senior hospital executives is tied to achieving the goals in those plans.

We created Health Quality Ontario to support quality improvement in patient care with evidence on the best clinical practices from the world's best researchers. We want to drive a culture of quality throughout the entire health care system.

And we're improving value for money, because quality and value go hand in hand; you really can't have one without the other. "Value" means getting the highest-quality care at the lowest possible cost. It means not spending on things that don't improve patient outcomes and spending more on things that do.

We're determined to keep making changes that give us better care for patients and better value for taxpayers. Take vitamin D testing, for example. The best available clinical evidence shows that vitamin D testing in otherwise healthy people does not improve outcomes. By deciding not to fund vitamin D tests for specific indications only, we were able to reinvest nearly \$70 million this year into care that does improve outcomes, like expanding free vaccinations for children.

We created local health integration networks. They have broken down silos for patients, helped to balance hospital budgets and improved the accountability of providers.

Now, for all of the progress we've made, we still have a long way to go. One quarter of our health care dollars are spent on avoidable conditions, like heart disease and type 2 diabetes. And while the number of Ontarians who smoke has dropped from 25% of the population to 19% over the last 10 years—a remarkable achievement—smoking-related illness remains the number one cause of preventable death in Ontario and costs our health care system almost \$2 billion every year.

There are still too many patients relying on emergency rooms instead of family care providers, because they can't always see their doctor when they need to.

Alternate-level-of-care, or ALC, patients remain a concern. These patients are in hospital beds when they would get better care at a lower cost at home or in long-

term care, meaning another patient who needs that bed can't be admitted to the hospital or spends too long in the emergency department.

Too many patients are being readmitted to hospital within days of leaving. And Ontarians are still having trouble navigating the system. They're receiving uncoordinated care from a number of providers.

We want to ensure that every care provider, administrator and agency understands that they are being entrusted with hard-working Ontarians' tax dollars, and that they need to be accountable not only to government, but to the people we all serve.

Accountability and transparency are a priority for me, because it drives change.

This takes me to an issue that is being thoroughly examined at public accounts, concerning our air ambulance service, Ornge.

In December 2011, when I was alerted to the troubling activities at Ornge, I took immediate action to ensure greater oversight and accountability. We're acting on all of the Auditor General's recommendations, including following up with Ornge on those recommendations that directly concerned them.

As a result of my concerns around executive compensation, we called in a forensic audit team to conduct an investigation on the use of public funds. The audit uncovered financial irregularities at Ornge that are a matter of grave concern. Ministry officials have now

referred the matter to the OPP, and that investigation is ongoing.

There's a new leadership team in place at Ornge; they're making significant progress. Patients are their top priority, starting with a new patient declaration of values, and recruiting a new patient advocate. More staff are being hired—more helicopter pilots, more aircraft pilots, more paramedics.

We've implemented an amended performance agreement with Ornge that will safeguard patient care and provide better value for taxpayer dollars. We've also introduced Bill 50, which, if passed, amends the Ambulance Act to further entrench oversight and transparency.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the front-line pilots, the paramedics and other staff at Ornge, whose exemplary work continually puts patients first.

I'm confident that the steps we have taken will provide the oversight needed to ensure a bright future for Ontario's air ambulance service.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop you there because I think that's appropriate. You can start with "Action Plan" on the next occasion.

It now being 5 o'clock, we will be adjourned until Monday morning at 8 o'clock promptly. I hope everyone can come back, and we'll see you then.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** See you then.

*The committee adjourned at 1700.*



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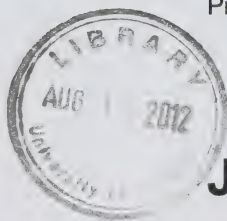
First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 23 July 2012



# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 23 juillet 2012

## Standing Committee on Estimates

Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care

Office of Francophone Affairs

## Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Ministère de la Santé  
et des Soins de longue durée

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES

Monday 23 July 2012

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Lundi 23 juillet 2012

*The committee met at 0801 in room 151.*MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
AND LONG-TERM CARE

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Good morning. We are resuming consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, vote 1401. There is a total of seven hours and 18 minutes remaining. When we concluded the last meeting, the minister had used 12 minutes of the 30 minutes that she has for a statement. That will be followed by statements or questions of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition and the third party.

Back to the minister: On the last occasion, you stopped at the end of page 5 of your prepared statement. I leave it to you, though. You can resume on page 6 for the benefit of people who were not here.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mr. Chair, do you have copies of the statement? This is it?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I have a spare copy.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No, it's okay. I have—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You have one.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, I do. Sorry about that.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Just for the committee members, if the minister resumes where I think she will, that will be the top of page 6.

Madam Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm sure you've been anxiously awaiting all weekend long for me to resume my statement, so I will happily begin talking about the action plan.

We have achieved real and measurable improvements across our health care system, but we still have big changes to make. That's because we face some significant challenges—challenges that are inescapable, challenges that demand action.

The first challenge is fiscal: The province has a \$15-billion budget shortfall. That means we have to drive more efficient service delivery. With health care representing 42% of the budget, my ministry needs to do its share to return it to balance.

The second challenge is demographic: Ontario has a growing and aging population which is already putting more pressure on health care. The province is now spending 65% more on health care than it did in 2003, and health care spending will continue to grow. But the

fiscal challenge demands that we slow that growth significantly.

If we want to ensure that our universal health care system will be there for future generations, we need to act now to protect and strengthen the system. We need to make tough choices today, if we are to protect the system for tomorrow. We have to make those decisions based on the best available evidence, and they must add value. The entire health care sector will have to play its part to make it happen.

We know that we need to put more funding into home and community care to help the growing number of seniors stay at home as long as possible. The demographic pressure demands it. Indeed, by not having adequate resources in the community, we're spending more than we need to in other parts of the system. We must build the continuum of care in the community so that there are more options for seniors to get the care they need, outside of hospitals and long-term-care homes.

In January of this year, I launched our government's action plan for health care. It's a plan that will shift spending to where we get the highest value for investment and that will make Ontario the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old. The plan will transform health care to ensure that it is centred on the patient and will invest health dollars where patients will benefit the most. It will also limit year-over-year expenditure growth.

Our action plan has three key priorities. The first is keeping Ontario healthy, because people want better health, not just better health care.

My ministry is promoting healthy living and supporting better management of chronic conditions like diabetes. We need people to participate in their own wellness, and we're working to give them the tools to do that, in part by taking advantage of supports like cancer screening and vaccination programs.

We've already seen success with the Ontario diabetes strategy, where we built on existing capacity and made new investments to improve prevention and care of diabetes in Ontario. We've increased the number of diabetes education teams from 220 to 321, and established centres for complex diabetes care to provide specialized care and treatment. Overall, health promotion and diabetes prevention initiatives are reaching more than 40,000 Ontarians who are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.



Meanwhile, childhood obesity rates have skyrocketed, and we know that obesity leads to chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease. That's why we must tackle this problem head-on. In May, I announced the Healthy Kids panel. It's a group of experts who will make recommendations to help us reach our goal of reducing childhood obesity by 20% over the next five years.

Ontario already has one of the best cancer survival rates in the world. We've got province-wide screening programs for colorectal, breast and cervical cancers that are helping to save lives every day. But this doesn't mean we can sit back and relax. The fight against cancer is an ongoing battle. That's why we committed to expanding these screening programs and to creating an online personalized cancer risk profile for all Ontarians. This profile will use medical and family history to measure the risk of cancer and then link patients to appropriate supports, screening or tests.

We're also addressing cancer, heart disease and other chronic illness through our tremendously successful smoke-free Ontario strategy. Under the strategy, 135,000 Ontarians have received supports to help them quit smoking in 2011.

We reaffirmed our commitment to the strategy by renewing it last spring, and we're enhancing supports. For example, the province will be providing free nicotine replacement therapy to those in treatment for addictions, and funds smoking cessation drugs.

We will continue our efforts to prevent kids from starting to smoke by increasing fines on those who sell tobacco to children, and will build on our contraband strategy by doubling our enforcement efforts.

The second priority in the action plan is providing patients with faster access and a stronger link to family health care. Working together with our doctors, we've done a lot already to give Ontarians better access to family health care. We now have 2.1 million more Ontarians with a family doctor.

What we want to do next is ensure that people who need care can see their primary health care provider, their family doctors, when they need them. This is critical to reducing pressure on other parts of the health care system, like emergency departments. That means making same-day or next-day appointments and after-hours care available when patients need them.

Our government believes that family health care should be the hub of patient-centred care, helping patients navigate the system, so we will work with our health care providers to strengthen the role of family health care in our system.

We also want to enhance the regional planning and delivery of care, giving a stronger role to the LHINs. After all, LHINs are the local managers of our health care system and play a critical role in local planning and accountability. We need to bring about a much more seamless patient journey across the health system: no more gaps in service, no more cracks for people to fall through.

We also want family health care providers to track quality improvement. My ministry will support the efforts of family doctors to improve patient care by giving them quality improvement tools similar to those now in hospitals, and primary care will be improved with evidence-based advice from Health Quality Ontario.

As you know, we are seeking a return to negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association for a new physician services agreement. Many of these system improvements form the basis of our proposals to the OMA. At the same time, we are determined to stick to a 0% increase in overall payments to physicians so we can invest in home care for 90,000 more seniors. I recognize and deeply value the contributions of our doctors. But they too will have to play their part to bring the province back to balance. That's why we're flattening payments to physicians after the last nine years saw an 85% increase in billings.

#### 0810

Our action plan's third priority is making sure that patients have access to the right care, at the right time, in the right place. Access to the right care means ensuring that patients get the care they need, whether it's an MRI or a life-saving drug, based on the best available evidence. My ministry is going to accelerate the evidence-based approach to patient care by strengthening Health Quality Ontario so that funding is increasingly shifted towards services that are known to get the best results for patients. In 2011-12, evidence-based changes allowed a reinvestment of \$125 million towards more effective patient care. Patients will get access to care at the right time with early interventions that are clinically shown to improve health and save health dollars in the long run. For example, expanding our telemedicine network means more patients are able to benefit from faster care right in their own community.

Nowhere is early intervention more important than in mental health and addictions. Some 70% of mental health problems first appear in childhood and adolescence. That's why, through our comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, there will be a focus on children's mental health. We took an important step by announcing \$11.2 million in funding for 144 nurses to work with mental health workers and school board staff to help students with mental health and/or substance abuse issues. We know that getting the right supports early decreases the impact of mental illness and addictions on people's lives and those of their families.

We will also continue to drive our wait times strategy so that patients can be assured of medically appropriate waits for their procedures. Less time waiting means fewer complications and more time for being healthy.

Finally, Ontario families need access to care in the right place. For our seniors, the right place to receive care, whenever possible, is at home, in their community. I recently announced the expert lead for a new seniors care strategy, Dr. Samir Sinha, a renowned geriatrician. He is developing a strategy that will keep seniors healthy at home, where they want to be, close to friends, neighbours

and family—and out of hospitals, out of ERs and out of long-term care.

As we announced in our budget, we will increase investments in home care and community services by an average of 4% annually for the next three years. That amounts to an additional \$526 million by 2014-15 to better support those seniors and other Ontarians who could benefit from care provided in the community.

We need to move away from our current provider-focused funding model and towards evidence-based, patient-focused funding that follows patients as they access the services they need, both in hospital and in the community. Since March, we've been working with hospitals to transition from a provider-centred funding model towards a patient-centred funding model, where funding is based on the services provided. Once hospitals adapt to this approach, we will all see better value for money and, more important, better-quality patient care. Patient-based funding will be phased in over the next three years, starting this year, 2012-13, in order to minimize disruption to services and impact on health human resources. Global funding will be reduced in proportion as patient-based funding increases. The phasing-in will allow health service providers to anticipate changes and plan for impacts on funding and services.

I now want to turn to our drug programs and how we're working to make them more fair, efficient and safe.

The Ontario Drug Benefit program provides assistance to all seniors for the cost of their prescription drugs. The ODB is a critical element of the health care services and supports that Ontario provides to seniors.

Since 2006, the government has made reforms to the Ontario drug system to improve value for both public drug programs and private payers. These changes include reducing the prices of most generic drugs to 25% of the cost of the comparable brand name products.

The savings in the ministry's drug programs were about \$500 million per year, by last year. An additional \$100 million in savings were achieved in 2011-12. These savings mean that we're able to fund more drugs for the Ontarians who need them. Since July 1, 2010, alone, 50 new brand name drugs, 36 new generics, and seven more cancer drugs are being funded. In addition, we have increased access to 82 drugs for new indications or as an expansion to general benefit.

We are taking steps to ensure that the ODB program is effective, properly administered and providing the most help to those in greatest need. The fairness of the program will be improved by asking the highest-income seniors—individuals with incomes over \$100,000, and \$160,000 for couples—to pay more of their own prescription drug costs, while ensuring that these costs do not impose an unreasonable burden. About 5% of ODB recipients will be paying more under this change. The changes will be effective beginning August 2014, to provide seniors with time to adjust to the new system.

We're also committed to ensuring safe access to drugs, particularly when it comes to prescription narcotics. The removal of OxyContin from the Canadian market this

winter highlighted the growing issue of prescription drug abuse in Ontario. We responded by restricting access to the tamper-resistant replacement, OxyNEO, by funding it through the Exceptional Access Program.

We expanded addiction treatment programs, information resources and monitoring for people who were misusing OxyContin through avenues such as:

- 24 new nurse practitioner positions in aboriginal health settings, half of which are helping support patients with opioid addictions;

- increased availability of telemedicine equipment for agencies that provide services to people with addictions, including working with Health Canada to increase use of telemedicine in First Nations communities;

- additional funding to purchase overdose prevention kits and training for front-line harm reduction workers; and

- streamlining the application process for Suboxone treatment, to ensure fast access for those who would benefit from it.

More recently, we reached out to the federal government to express our concerns about the generic form of oxycodone entering the Canadian market. Not tamper-resistant like OxyNEO, an even cheaper generic form would reintroduce the problems we faced with OxyContin.

All of these measures were taken with the best interest of patients in mind. We want better value in our drug programs while ensuring patients' well-being is taken into consideration at every step, so we can deliver a fair, efficient and safe drug system to Ontarians.

In conclusion, we have made substantial progress over the past nine years when it comes to improving the province's health care system. Today, we need to adjust our approach to strike a new balance, all the while continuing to work collaboratively with our valued health system partners. Without a doubt, there are challenges ahead, but there are opportunities too. This is the time to seize those opportunities for transformation to get better care for patients and better value for taxpayers. New investments must focus on promoting healthier living, on reducing the time patients wait to see their doctor, and on enhancing home and community care.

The ideal health system we want to achieve with the action plan is sustainable, patient-centred, evidence-based, and promotes quality, all while providing the care people need today and tomorrow. When we've achieved our vision, Ontario will be the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old.

Thank you for your attention. I'd now invite your questions.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And thank you. That was almost exactly 20 minutes.

The time is now for the official opposition. You have up to 30 minutes for either questions or a statement or a combination of both. I recognize Mr. Leone.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Minister, for spending some time with us today. It's probably going to be a pretty long day with you. We have



a lot of questions, certainly, of a ministry that is, as you've mentioned, rather large, enormous. From that perspective, and in asking questions, for us, it's kind of like, where do you begin? Where do you start? How do you pinpoint where to unlock and unravel some key issues and information that would be helpful for our scrutiny of your ministry? Certainly, that is an important function that we have as the opposition here.

**0820**

I don't want to speak for my colleagues, but I'll speak for myself: From the outside looking in, this ministry seems to be, since it's very large and very enormous, chaotic, from the outside. I'm wondering if you could give us an indication of whether, from the inside, it is as chaotic as it looks from the outside.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The answer to that is no. We have an extremely capable, competent and focused team of ministry officials who work very, very hard to make the system work.

I'm joined by my deputy, Saâd Rafi, today, and I'm sure he'll want to speak about the structure of the ministry.

What I can tell you is that Ontarians are blessed to have the health care they have. Is the system perfect? No, it is not. Can we do better? Absolutely. I outlined our vision for the future, to actually drive better-quality patient care, faster access to care and get better value for money. In order to do that, we need all parts of the system working together. I think many people will say that they get excellent care once they get into the system. It's the hand-offs between parts of the system, when people leave hospital to go home, for example—that's where we're really working hard to build the bridges between different parts of the health care system, and that work is happening.

You think about our seniors strategy. We've now got Dr. Samir Sinha, who's our expert lead on our seniors strategy. His work will cut across all parts of the health care system to make it work for people. That's really the next frontier in health care reform: to make the system work for people, to break down the silos between the ministry.

I don't know if the deputy wants to talk more about the number of ADMs, the responsibilities they have—

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Certainly. Thank you.

The span and scope, as you mentioned, is broad, but the approach that we've taken is really not that dissimilar to other ministries, by breaking down major programmatic and financial areas. We have probably one of the most seasoned and experienced executive teams, some of which were in place when I arrived. Some have been subsequently added or replaced as people move on to other opportunities and other interests.

We take a very disciplined approach to the financial aspects of the ministry. We've now started a monthly review; the financial part of that was quarterly, because of course we report quarterly to central agencies, especially finance, on our budget. We have managed to hold the line on spending and transfers such that two years

ago, government was spending about 6% in growth on health care; in the fiscal year 2012-13, it will be 2.3%. That's a dramatic change, but we are working quite diligently to try to manage that growth amount by working with the major transfer payment partners. One of the keys to that will be implementing, as the minister mentioned in her remarks, a health system funding reform, which starts with moving towards an activity-based funding model. Many of you will be familiar with activity-based costing. That's one way, in the hospital sector, to try to make sure that we can apportion costs for the services that people need, as opposed to apportioning costs for the service provider, which has been historically the approach that has been taken.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** That is good information, and thank you for that. But one of the reasons why people from the outside see your ministry as being chaotic is the number of instances where large boxes of information—the brown envelopes that are circulating, the ones that are passed off to ourselves and probably to the NDP as well—we see that a lot, coming from your ministry, particularly with Ornge. We're seeing it now in other areas as well, eHealth being one of them. Doesn't that seem chaotic? We're talking about bureaucrats in your ministry handing information to us, probably against your own will. Doesn't that give the image of chaos? And how do you account for that? What's going on in your ministry? How is the morale amongst your bureaucrats if they feel the need to get around your authority and pass on information to us?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The first thing I want to say is that we are all striving to make the system stronger, and we are always open to knowing what needs to be done to make the system stronger. I would encourage you, invite you, to actually work with us to make the system stronger. If you have information that comes to you, I trust that you will share it with us, to ensure that that information is put to good use, that that information does work to achieve what I think is our shared goal, and that is best possible value for money and highest-quality patient care.

We will continue to work with opposition. I think as long as there is government, there will be opportunities to improve it.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I think the issue here, Minister, is that folks in your ministry, rather than coming to you directly, are coming to us to get to you. That's why people think there is chaos. The fact is that they're sidestepping your authority somewhat, coming to us and giving information about different things—not me personally, but certainly members of our caucus. That's why I think people think that there is a bit of chaos in your ministry, because they're not coming through the chains—they're not going to your deputy minister; they're not going to you. They're coming to members of the opposition to try and shed some light on some of the problems within your ministry.

Why do you think that is? Is it just that they don't see the authority of yourself or your deputy as being import-

ant enough? Is it because of perhaps a perceived lack of willingness to listen to your bureaucrats? What is the reason why we're getting so many folks coming forward with information that has come out through public accounts, that has been asked through question period—information that should, I think, be going up the normal bureaucratic chain. Rather than doing that, they're coming to us. Why do you think that is? Is it just because they think that you don't listen? What's the issue there?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You're building questions based on information I don't have, so if you would be prepared to share the information that you have been given, I can then respond to it—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Well, Minister—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** But what I can do, Mr. Leone, is ask the deputy to talk about the processes within the ministry that do actually foster that spirit of quality improvement, value improvement. We have made significant progress in transparency. We now publicly report information that, under previous government, was hidden. The Auditor General now has the ability to go places where he never was able to go before, and we have benefited from that. We've got transparent information on outcomes. Wait times, for example: We now know what wait times are for virtually every procedure in virtually every hospital in the province. That was not something we had under the previous government. So we have fostered a culture of transparency, of continuous quality improvement.

I can tell you that my experience is that our ministry officials are driving hard to improve health care for the people of this province and improve value for money. There are more formal processes, I'm sure, and perhaps the deputy could speak to that.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I would just like to underscore that the ministry is actually, somewhat uniquely, a group of very passionate and dedicated individuals who have spent their entire careers in the field of health care, either as practitioners and then moved into a policy realm or an operational realm, or have been on the policy/operational side for many, many years, and they work in all corners of the province.

I think that we have tried to foster increased access, added freedom of information into the hospital sector. The minister mentioned wait times and the transparency of wait times and the auditor's role.

0830

In addition to that, a very strong employee engagement and inclusion approach: I meet with a committee of voluntary leaders of all levels within the ministry who dedicate their time, as I mentioned, on a voluntary basis to try to improve employee engagement and inclusion in the workplace. That's an area that is very important to the management team and especially myself. These are areas that are going to bring continued engagement with staff, dedication and, I would say, increased responsibility and accountability that come with such a significant portfolio as health care. I think everybody has a view about the health care that they receive, and I think people at the

Ministry of Health are quite committed in trying to provide those services in a way that speaks to the integrity of public service.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** You both mentioned a goal: certainly, a mission to be transparent. I'm wondering if you would be willing to provide the committee with all of the correspondence between your political staff and the Premier's office related to the Ornge scandal.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Are you making a motion? Or how does this—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm asking a question.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Mr. Chair, if it's a motion, we'd like to have a copy and have a look at it.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** It's not a motion. He just asked a question. He did not use the word "motion"; it's just a question.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The committee is entitled to get the information they ask for, so if you give us some more parameters on what time frame etc., we'll do our best to accommodate the will of the committee.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Great. If the will of the committee is to ask for all correspondence related to eHealth sent between July 18, 2012, and July 23, 2012, between your political staff in the ministry, bureaucrats and eHealth Ontario employees, would you be willing to provide that as well?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said, we would certainly do our best to get the information this committee wants.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** And if the committee decides to request access to your House book, would you be willing to provide that as well?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, I would say, let the committee ask for information and we will do our best to get that information for you.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Minister, the PC caucus is currently waiting for a number of responses to FOI requests, many of them filed more than six months ago, with respect to these items. That's why we're asking the question: If it is a goal of your ministry to be transparent and we've requested them through freedom of information, do you believe that it would be a responsibility of your ministry to provide that information through freedom-of-information requests?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As you know, freedom-of-information requests do not go through my office. They are dealt with by the ministry, so I will turn to the deputy for a response on that question.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Forgive me, I don't know the exact request because we track them by the type of request. I'll try to find out their status.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's also important to add that we have significantly expanded access under freedom of information. For example, hospitals now are subject to freedom of information. I can say that we have learned information through that that I think demonstrates the importance of transparency.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Minister, we have undertaken to receive documents from the Ministry of Energy in the



past—during this session, actually. In response to that request for information and documents, the Ministry of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority provided us with a letter. That's what their response was.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** It's got nothing to do with it.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It does, and I'm leading up to that, Mr. Dhillon. The reality is, I'm hoping that through the motion that we passed last Thursday, we won't be getting a similar response, with respect to a one-page or two-page letter in response to those documents that we've requested. Would that be accurate?

**Mr. Saad Rafi:** Absolutely. I would just reiterate, though, through the Chair, that the scope of the request is quite large. We've received it; as you well know, it has been voted on. We've already proceeded to start working on it. We appreciate that the time frame was a little bit better than in other motions that we've received, so we will be providing the materials that we can based on the approach that the committee has taken.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. Thank you for that. I have some questions with respect to other comments that were made in the opening remarks. One that particularly piqued my interest was on page 6, this third sentence here that says, "The first challenge is fiscal. The province has a \$15-million budget shortfall. That means we must strive for more efficient service delivery."

I'm wondering if you could give us some information with respect to eHealth Ontario in terms of how much it has cost the province of Ontario—just give us a general number—and the progress that you've made, with particular reference to eHealth Ontario.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Absolutely. We are enormously proud of the progress that is being made at eHealth Ontario. We now have about 60% of our family doctors and 40% of community-based specialists with EMRs. That, of course, is the first part, a foundational building block of a full electronic health record. We continue to be on track to have EMRs for all Ontarians by 2015. We've made remarkable progress in getting those electronic medical records in those offices.

We also have made extraordinary progress on parts of eHealth that aren't always considered by the public to be eHealth. The Ontario Telemedicine Network is a global example of the possibilities of telemedicine. We've got people in parts of Ontario who would have had to travel a great distance to see a specialist and would have had to wait a long time to see those specialists, who are now getting access to that care right in their own community through telemedicine and eHealth.

The ENITS is another terrific example of where eHealth is saving us money. ENITS is the emergency neuro image transfer system, where, for example, if someone had a car accident and damage to their head in Owen Sound, they could have the scan done there and would be able in real time to transfer that image to a neurosurgeon specialist available 24-7 who would be able to talk to the attending physician, see the image and make a determination about whether that patient should be transferred or not. That system has paid for itself and

more by avoidable transfers. You can imagine, if someone has an injury in Owen Sound, the last thing you want to do is transfer that patient. What we are doing now through ENITS is, we're preventing and avoiding those unnecessary patient transfers.

So eHealth is a very important part of how we're going to be able to improve health care under more restricted fiscal growth, and we are making significant progress on that front.

I think you asked for the cumulative since the inception of eHealth Ontario. I don't know if you want to go back to the pre-eHealth days under how far back we can go, but perhaps the deputy has been able to get that information.

**Mr. Saad Rafi:** I only have with me four fiscal years, so from 2009-10 to the current, so the budget for fiscal 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12—sorry, the actuals—and then the budget for 2012-13. We've seen a reduction in spending due to efficiencies and the reduction of use of various resources like consultants. In 2009-10, the agencies spent \$267 million; 2010-11, \$365 million; and in 2011-12, \$410 million. Budgeted for 2012-13 is \$521 million. That includes both operating and capital, approximately two thirds operating, one third capital.

**0840**

**Mr. Rob Leone:** As a question of interest, your ministry health-based planning briefing books: The notes that I have here—I don't have a page number, unfortunately—say transfer payments to eHealth Ontario are different figures than the figures you just provided. Are there additional payments that aren't considered transfer payments to eHealth Ontario that were part of—unfortunately, I didn't write the page number down, to know, but my numbers here say 2010, \$321.4 million; 2011, \$369.5 million; and 2012, \$376.5 million, which were a little lower than what you just provided me. My colleague Michael Harris is looking at the specifics. Is there an additional cost other than the transfer payments, then?

**Mr. Saad Rafi:** No, and I apologize for that. My numbers seem to be off from what you're quoting by a small amount, so we will reconcile those. I thought I had publicly reported budget numbers—I think they are. We'll try to get that reconciliation or explanation.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Minister, you stated that 60% and 40% of doctors in different categories are up and running on EMRs. How many doctors do we have in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Twenty-six thousand.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** How many of those doctors would be on EMRs and have access to provide—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me get those numbers for you.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The numbers that I have here state that there about 9,000 doctors on EMRs. I'm just trying to find out where I have that number from. I think this is a number that you've publicly disclosed. I think it might even be in your briefing notes, in your opening statement.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So, 9,000 physicians, with nine million patients, are participating with EMRs. I just want to clarify that those are the family doctors. That is

9,000 of the—I'll get you the number on how many family physicians. Well, we can do that math pretty quickly, right?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Oh, super-fast.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So, 13,000 family doctors, and 9,000 are on—about 60% of family physicians.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. We've spent well over a billion dollars since 2009-10. The Auditor General reported in 2009 that we had spent a billion dollars on electronic health records for the total span—that included a number that was part of even what our government stated, and you've stated that publicly as well. So there has been a billion dollars spent prior to 2009. Now we have more than a billion dollars, perhaps getting closer to a billion and a half dollars, since 2009-10 on eHealth. What do we have to show for it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What we've got is nine million out of 13 million Ontarians with electronic medical records. We've got, in some parts of Ontario, linkages now being created between various health care providers. ConnectingGTA is a very, very important initiative of eHealth Ontario, where the five GTA LHINs are linking all of their hospitals, all of their long-term-care homes, all of their community care access centres. I believe 700 providers are feeding in to ConnectingGTA.

I think it's very important to focus, of course, on the cost but also on the enormous benefits. Once we have fully functioning, linked electronic medical records for Ontarians, we will have tremendous savings in reduced unnecessary duplicative testing. We will have significantly reduced costs related to medication errors, for example. We will have patients with much smoother transitions in the health care system. They will not have to repeat their story to every new provider that they deal with. We will have linked records.

We will also be able to use that information to better plan our health care system. We'll know where the overlap is, where the duplication is. Currently, one example of the success of eHealth Ontario is that all of our imaging in hospitals is digital, so when you go to a hospital, they will be able to access your images from previous visits. In many parts of the province now, all of the records from the region are stored in one repository. In southwestern Ontario, the South West LHIN and Erie St. Clair LHIN are joined. All hospitals in those two LHINs are able to access images of individuals.

The savings are enormous. We must invest in eHealth if we want to take advantage of the technology that's available to improve patient care and improve value for money.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Minister, you stated that 40% of family physicians are part of that. My number is closer to 35%, but that's okay.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Sixty percent of family physicians.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Sixty percent of family physicians—representing nine million Ontarians?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So that is roughly three quarters of the population of the province.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, 60%; yes.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** How do you arrive at the nine million Ontarians? Is it simply a proportion? Are these the most industrious physicians, the ones that are participating, therefore more Ontarians and physicians, in terms of proportion, are actually covered under eHealth? The number, as I recall, probably several months ago, perhaps a year ago, was that half of Ontarians were on electronic medical records. Now we're saying nine million Ontarians are under electronic medical records, which is a lot more than half. I'm wondering how we got from six and a half million to nine million and how you can account for that number. Where do we get the number nine million?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Why don't I get you the answer to that? But I think if we've got 9,000 physicians at 1,000 patients per physician, that gets us to nine million. But let me get you the assumptions behind that number.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay, so that, in its essence, is not an accurate number. It's a calculation based on—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will get you the foundation for that number. I think the deputy—

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Just a small point would be to say that the growth in EMR physicians has been conscious by eHealth Ontario and OntarioMD, who is their partner. That is a branch of the Ontario Medical Association. In working with the Ontario Medical Association and the section of family physicians and eHealth Ontario, that number is meant to continually grow such that we will get a greater and greater proportion of family physicians on electronic medical records and then use the other tools that have been mentioned thus far to connect those records to create an electronic health record across the province, be that through telemedicine, be that through a drug profile viewer where every Ontario drug beneficiary has the ability, when they present, if they present at an emergency room or an emergency department—that the attending physician would see the drugs that they have been prescribed through ODB, which helps in a quick assessment and triage of the individual. We want to link those records together, and that's what the EHR piece is doing. The number of family physicians with an electronic medical record is meant to continually grow to hopefully get everybody.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** If 9,000 family physicians are on electronic medical records, you're saying 40% of specialists are with—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Forty percent of community-based specialists—some specialists are hospital-based, so 40% of community-based specialists.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I just wanted to make that clear. I wonder if you could comment on a comparative analysis of e-health systems within Canada and around the world. We are currently about, from your numbers, nine million patients—we have 13 million Ontarians—which is, you said, about two thirds to three quarters there. Other coun-



tries, other jurisdictions like the UK, are at 99% with their electronic medical records. Why is the Ontario situation so problematic? Why are we so far behind everyone else in the world with respect to uptake on our electronic medical records?

It seems to me that we're spending an awful lot of money, billions of dollars. We're at \$2.5 billion spent, covering only a small portion of our patients, yet we don't have full uptake yet. I'm wondering how much it's going to cost to get everyone up and running, and why we're lagging everyone else in the world.

**0850**

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm sorry, you're going to have to answer that in the next round. The half-hour is now up.

Ms. Gélinas, it's your turn.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Good morning, Minister Matthews.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Good morning.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My questions are in a different direction this morning. I will start with a little bit of northern health. The first one is, do you keep track of how many of the small and rural hospitals—small and rural won't only be northern; they'll be wherever they are in Ontario—are currently in a budgetary deficit position or are expected to be in a deficit position?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that—and the deputy will get a specific answer—one of the great successes of the LHINs has been to work with hospitals to get appropriate accountability agreements and driving to balance. Overall in Ontario, we actually have a surplus amongst our hospitals. As we move to patient-based funding models to fund our hospitals, we are excluding those small hospitals, because the function they serve in their community is different. We want to work with those smaller hospitals to drive efficiencies, but that formula, we don't think, is the right formula for those small hospitals.

I wonder if we're able to break it down by type of hospital.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Not at my fingertips. We'd have to survey the 152 entities, or actually—yes, entities, I suppose; not the locations.

I can say that there were 122 hospitals in the fiscal year 2011-12 of the approximately—I think there would have been 154 at that time that had a total surplus of \$518 million; and thirty hospitals in 2011-12 had a deficit in total of \$44 million, so just a little over \$1 million, on average, per hospital. I don't have a breakdown by region, let alone by hospital, but if you would like that or need that, then we will produce it in the follow-up.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The numbers you just quoted me, the 122 that were either balanced or surplus and the 30 that were in a deficit position: That's from 2011-12, the year that just went by?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Of the budgets that have been submitted for 2012-13, do you have any idea if we are in the same range or if things are getting better or worse?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I would say that the trend has been to see a greater surplus in hospitals and reduced deficits over the last four or five years. It's hard to predict what will happen at an individual hospital, in terms of who presents and what issues they may have; to know, going into the fiscal year, or even halfway through the fiscal year, as to whether they will be generating a surplus or not. But we do work with them, come the end of their fiscal year, to get that roll-up.

I would say that the Ontario Hospital Association would quite proudly say that they are the most efficient set of hospitals in the country, and I think our recent experience with them demonstrates that that is probably the case.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I hear a lot about that \$518-million surplus from hospitals. Where does it go? And where does it sit right now?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We do currently allow hospitals to retain that surplus or accumulate the deficit because we don't want to remove incentives to be efficient. I think that is an issue, though, as we see these surplus numbers to be very significant numbers. We do have to take another look at that policy.

Perhaps the deputy could speak more to that process.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** There will be certain times where we do get recoveries from hospitals. Sometimes we might flow them cash to get at a certain point at the beginning or the end of the fiscal year. We are working with them on provincial budget 2011—or maybe 2010; I'm sorry, I can't remember offhand—announced that we would be working on the working capital deficit that is cumulatively held by hospitals. We're in the throes of implementing that, such that we've assessed hospitals on how they've used working capital, and in some cases that has been deemed to be not consistent, but all have followed generally accepted accounting principles. So we're trying to reconcile the working capital deficits to get those to a point where they should be. As the minister said, if we see significant surpluses continuing, we'll have to examine our existing policies.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Of the 30 hospitals that accumulated \$44 million, you will be able to let me know where they are and if they're part of the small and rural hospitals? Can I have the actual names listed so I don't have to look through?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Sure.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you. The next question has to do with, during the budget negotiations we had asked for a \$100-million fund for northern and rural hospitals. That was our ask; we never got it. But we did secure an agreement that \$20 million would be invested in what is now called a transformation fund for small, rural and northern hospitals. I just want a little bit of clarification as to who is in and who is not; as in, is it solely for the rural hospitals in the north? Can the five big hospitals in the north have access? Do rural hospitals that are not in the north have access?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** We are working with a few organizations to determine how best to deploy those funds, which are, I believe, \$20 million—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, they are.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** So, for example, we're working with the Ontario Hospital Association's small and rural hospital caucus—I'm not sure if they call it a caucus, but their group—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Association, yes.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Association—within the OHA. In addition to that, we're working with the North East and North West LHINs and also with Dr. Roger Strasser, the dean of NOSM, to come up with transformational but also lasting—that will require hospitals to do something that connects them to the community. The consensus that is emerging is that they want to, especially in the north-east and northwest—I don't need to tell you—make sure that there's a continued and increased bond between community services and hospital services, of which they would probably be able to demonstrate a great deal in their experience, relative to other jurisdictions in the province.

We have not yet secured how to flow that and where, but, yes, we are looking at small and rural, and need to get an agreeable definition as well beyond the north, because I believe the budget says small, rural and northern—that's not a quote—so there's an "and" in there that suggests to us that it applies beyond the north.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** But if I could just add, I think it's wonderful, and thank you for giving us that focused money that will drive transformation. We know, and you know better than most, that as health care gets better, the role of hospitals in those smaller communities changes, and we must be proactive about that. We would be very happy to work with you—I would be very happy to work with you—as we develop how that transformation will be accelerated with that additional investment.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** From what you said, Mr. Deputy—and, thank you, Minister—is that you are planning a rollout plan but the plan is not all finished?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Correct.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Will it be something that will be accessible, as in, will I know, once the plan is finished, what's in it, what's not, or who will have access to that final plan to know what's in and what's not?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** We can certainly make that available, as the minister said. In fact, I think she's probably gone one further and invited you to provide that input. Yes, for sure, we would be happy to communicate that throughout the region. I think the North East and North West LHIN leadership has been quite open about their approaches in the community, both at the CEO and the board level, as well as, I think, the leadership within those hospitals, which I hope has been your experience as well.

0900

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, many of them have come to me already.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think we'll find that \$20 million doesn't go—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Very far.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —all that far. But we've got other opportunities on transformation. That's a big part of what the ministry is driving right now.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You talked about the shift to funding by procedure. From a briefing I had—you had offered a briefing, and I took it—we got a document that showed that 91 out of the 152 hospitals will either receive the same amount of money or a lesser amount of money as they transition to the funding per procedure. You don't call it that way; you call it—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Patient-based funding.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** —patient-based funding, thank you. Of those 91, do they know who they are?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I thought the number was 96—not to quibble, but just to be accurate.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It could be.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Some will also get an increase; you said a decrease or the same.

They absolutely know who they are. They absolutely know how much they are going to get. We are working with the hospitals, through numerous committees of experts, not just hospital individuals. We want to roll out the overall approach, which we call health system funding reform, to CCACs and long-term-care homes in subsequent phases.

So the hospitals know who they are. They know their allocation. They know, if they were going to grow, that they've been limited to 2% growth, or a 2% reduction if they have to become a little bit more efficient. That's a purposeful ban being put in place. We have been working very closely with them for months and months.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And not only do they know how much they're going to be affected, they also know why. My experience has been that hospitals, even hospitals that are being negatively impacted, understand why and are working to become more efficient. So in fact, with this shift from historic global funding, where nobody could unravel the rationale of why a certain hospital had a certain budget, people now understand why they're getting what they're getting and what they need to do to become more efficient. It is having the desired effect.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Just to make sure that I understand the numbers right, out of 152, 96 would be affected by the new payment model that you're rolling out. Out of those 96, my numbers show that 91 of them would either stay the same or be in the bracket that goes down 2%, and very few of them are actually increasing. Did I get this wrong, or am I close—

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I should probably correct the record. I foolishly said 96; you might indeed be correct. I apologize for that—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Hold on. Fifty-five hospitals are excluded. The small hospitals are excluded, which leaves 91 hospitals included in the reform.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Because we have had a merger—



**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes, because there are some mergers. That's why 96 comes down to 91. Nevertheless—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So 91 are included in the reform.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So 91 are included in the reform. Some 63% of hospitals will see gains, and 90% of hospitals will see no more than a 1% swing in funding. We have put that band in place. The largest decrease is 1.5%. The largest increase is 1.8%.

I will just confirm these numbers. These are the most recent numbers that I have, and I will just confirm that these are in fact the most recent numbers.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** The reason for some small fluctuations is that how we recognize revenue and how hospitals have booked that revenue and how they account for their money is a continual process for us to sort out with the hospital. Throughout the course of the fiscal year, there might be ups and downs that would vary by fractions of a per cent. That's why there are certain numbers that, at the time we briefed you, we would have given you as the number of the day. Hospitals have come back to us and said, "No, hang on a second. Our audited financials have said X, Y and Z." So we've committed to make both beginning-of-year and in-year adjustments, if needed. This is not a matter of penalizing communities, or individuals in those communities—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** In fact, what's really important about this is that we're changing the incentive structure within hospital funding. We used to have a system where hospitals would close down the operating room for two weeks in the summer in order to meet their budgetary targets. They would restrict access to meet a budget. We think the right incentive should be: Provide the care the people in your community need, and you will be paid for that. So we're shifting the compensation structure to reflect the activity that is being performed in those hospitals.

Ontario is not a leader in this. In fact, Ontario is kind of late coming to this change in funding for hospitals, and we've learned from the experience of jurisdictions that have done this before us.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. I would be interested in getting the more up-to-date numbers that you can share with me, that show, of the 91 hospitals that are included, how many are getting an increase—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Fifty-seven are getting an increase.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sixty-seven are seeing an increase?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, 57—63% of the 91.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, it's 57 hospitals; got you. Do I take it for granted that 91 minus 57 means 40% are seeing a decrease or stay the same?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, 37%.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And of that 37%, how many are decreasing versus staying the same?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We will do our best to get you those numbers.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would appreciate that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Okay.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm still trying to focus on the north for a little while. The Northern Health Travel Grant: This is something that is used very much for the people I represent, and a lot of people in the north. During the election in 2011, there was a promise that was made to bring the Northern Health Travel Grant online. It's certainly something that got a lot of press in northern Ontario, where a lot of people use them. I was wondering how this is coming along and when we can expect this to be done.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Deputy?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I'm sorry; I don't have a sort of estimated time of having that complete, but it is something that we have to turn our minds to. We have not completed the exercise of not just putting it online but examining other elements that could be looked at, increased, improved in how we administer the travel grant.

We've had some successes with not utilizing the travel grant, because we've been able to provide diagnosis and services within the community, such as over 1,100 telemedicine sites that serviced about 144,000 Ontarians, at the latest figure. So we are trying to use other ways than dislodging someone from their community, and all the stress and concerns that go with that, including the family upset that that causes. That's why we're trying—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think also there was a time when it took a long, long time for people to get reimbursed for their northern travel. The ministry has done a very, very good job, tightening that time up, so 95% of applications are processed within three weeks. There are no applications taking more than four weeks. The ministry really has done a terrific job in reducing that processing time for those travel grants.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Coming back to the online, is there someone within the ministry presently working on this, or is it a plan that is to come in the future?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I don't know, off the top of my head. I certainly know the division responsible. I don't know the individual who might be developing the policy work on that. I apologize.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. If we don't have a date, do we have a time frame as to when you hope that this process would be accessible online?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I do not.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No. Okay.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** It will have to go through decision-making and also other considerations. I would not want to give you set expectations that I have no line of sight on as to whether they're on track at this point.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I take it from your questioning that you think it's a good idea and the sooner the better.

0910

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, I do, and yes, I do.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Okay.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** There are two lines of thought out in northern Ontario. I agree with you that the use of telemedicine is increasing, I would say, exponentially in

northern Ontario—the number of sites, and people becoming more and more comfortable with the technology. At the same time, there still seems to be a huge demand for the northern travel grant. I was wondering if we could have access to the number of requests that have been done and—I have no idea if the ministry looks at this—from which communities they are coming.

Anecdotally, I could rhyme off a few communities where people seem to be sent out of town an awful lot. Others, I would guess, have embraced telemedicine a little bit better and tend to be doing better at keeping people in the north, I agree with you, where they want to be. But this is just hearsay. I don't have the data; I'm hoping you guys do.

So I'm asking as to, do you know how many requests, where the requests are going up, in which communities they are going up—and that's the request for the Northern Health Travel Grant.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We will undertake to get you that information.

I think the other important piece is, now that we have a medical school in the north, in Sudbury and Thunder Bay, we're seeing more and more pretty complicated procedures that are able to be done in the north, where not too long ago people did have to travel to the south.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** We'll have to search that information because I don't think we readily capture by community. We'll get that information for you—both number of requests and from which community?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, with an idea of, if we can have a little bit of a trend. The people who handle telemedicine are very good. They send me—and, I'm assuming, every MPP in the north—every three months, we get a chart that shows how many times the telemedicine network has been used, from which community. It's very useful. I don't remember requesting it, but it comes every three months. Here it is—and it is by area. It would be helpful and useful to have something similar to this, but that would be for the request for the Northern Health Travel Grant, to see how it's used.

If you are looking at the Northern Health Travel Grant, is any energy going to be put into looking at what it really costs people versus how much the government is reimbursing? Is this something that you have any intention of looking at?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** It's hard to assess what it costs that individual because people use different means and methods. We have a strength of caregivers in the province; we may have people who have family connections—all manner of different things. Sometimes costs can be understated, sometimes they can be overstated, so it's really hard to predict, "We're reimbursing X per cent of actual total costs," because I think the actual total cost is very elusive.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Let me point you in a direction. Gas is at \$1.34 in Sudbury this morning. When the Northern Health Travel Grant was set, gas was at 78 cents a litre; it is now \$1.34. A lot of people using the Northern Health Travel Grant drive. They used to drive,

paying gas at 78 cents a litre, and they now pay—I suppose once you're down south, you guys pay about \$1.21, \$1.27, I'm not too sure, depending on where you live. Sure, you can fill up once you get to your appointment, but you still have to fill up before you leave for your appointment. This certainly is a direct cost that has gone up substantially while the cost of reimbursement has not. Was there ever any thought given to linking those two? They don't have to be linked weekly, because the price of gas fluctuates an awful lot—but more than once every 10 years, some place in between?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes. We're not quite that slow. I believe it did go up in 2007, but fair point; point made. We'll look at that as part of the review.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm taking it that this is an area where you think we should increase spending.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** This is an area where I think we should look at the real cost. If the cost of travel—I mean, people from the Cochrane corridor used to use the train to come down to Toronto. There won't be any; there is no more train. Ontario Northland is being cancelled. For the frail, a train is very comfortable. It allows you to make this eight-hour drive even if you're frail; it's comfortable. Once this is no more, then those people will rely on cars more and they will rely on the bus, if they are capable of enduring a pretty rough bus ride.

It's really to link the real cost. As things move, as government makes decisions that affect the ability of people in the north to go to their appointments in the south, it would be nice for the Northern Health Travel Grant to be linked into what's happening to the people who use the program. If the price of transportation—as I say, flights: We now have Porter that comes to the north. I used to pay 600 bucks for a one-way ticket to come to Toronto. I now pay 97 bucks. Porter has allowed us to have way cheaper flights. I can see no reason to give somebody \$600 if you pay for a \$97 ticket, but at the same time, if you use other modes of transportation, to be a little bit more responsive—we're now in 2012. Last time you looked at the reimbursement, it was five years ago. Things have changed for the people using the program.

I'm just curious to see if you do anything to try to address what will be the demand, or if you just respond to the demand. Is there any planning at the ministry level that looks at what will be the demand for the Northern Health Travel Grant, linking the different programs? I made an allusion to the telemedicine that does allow people to stay home. Do you link those two at any time?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** We will for sure because, as I think you've agreed, we would prefer to see an uptake in the Ontario Telemedicine Network as well as other such things as ENITS, as the minister has talked about. There are many other technology changes that are coming and that are coming on stream.

We will have to do that because, of course, if you keep pace with the cost of goods and services, that cost to deliver that service is going to increase. Hopefully, if the volume reduces, then we have a chance to keep within



our 2% growth figures. So yes, for sure, we will be doing that.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You have about two minutes left.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Man, that goes by fast.

If there is planning going on, is this something that is either FOI-able or is this something that is shared? How do we—I'll speak for myself: How do I find out that, "Yes, this has been looked at, and here's what we found?"

**Mr. Sa  d Rafi:** When we are at that juncture, then we could perhaps give an offer to brief you. That juncture being through the minister, cabinet and other decision-making steps, we'd be more than pleased to brief you and any other northern MPPs who might be interested in what we're proposing, what we've come up with.

I am reminded by staff that some of the IT challenges are to get our system such that we can accept some of the personal health information that comes with this in an electronic form—a paper form is one thing. That's our current step in terms of when it's going to be coming online. We have some significant work to do on what we call the PHI, personal health information, IT database or IT elements—that's back to your previous question—but we would be happy to talk to you about what we're taking in and take your comments today to include in our review.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** About 20 seconds.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I guess it's the clerk who follows up to make sure that the questions that were not answered this morning will be answered in writing.

0920

**Mr. Sa  d Rafi:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Do we have a date?

**Mr. Sa  d Rafi:** We did hear from—sorry.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** In general, it's 30 days, after which a reminder is sent.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** The minister now has up to a half an hour for rebuttal or a statement if she wishes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And I do wish. I believe that members of the committee have received a slide deck. Oh, you are about to receive a slide deck.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** It is your time. The clock has been going since they were handed out.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Oh, I apologize.

What I wanted to do is take kind of a higher-level overview of how far we've come in nine years. I think at the very centre of our health care system has to be, how are patients doing: Are they getting the care they need? They need to guide the decisions we make, the programs we fund, the services we deliver, and timely access to health care is at the crux of this. Ontarians deserve the best care when and where they need it. Ontarians pay for our health care system. It is designed for them. It is their system, and it is up to those of us who work in health care, who have the privilege of working in health care, to make the system work for patients.

When we came to office, we were faced with a broken health care system. In fact, we had a health care system that was teetering on the brink of two-tier. I can tell you that as an elected official, as someone who spends time going door to door talking to patients, the 2003 campaign made it very, very obvious to me that we had serious problems in our health care system. Talking to my colleagues who were campaigning in 2003, they heard the same things I did, right across this province. It was virtually impossible to get a family doctor. When people needed a procedure done, cataract surgery or hip replacement surgery, they waited literally years in pain in the case of a hip replacement, with their vision impaired in the case of cataract surgery. They waited years to get the procedure that they needed.

We had a brain drain in Ontario. Doctors were leaving this province because Ontario was not a good place to practise medicine. We were training and losing doctors. We have now reversed that.

Hospital deficits were out of control. There was no appropriate oversight of hospital budgets. I don't make the claim lightly that we were on the brink of two-tier health care. I had a lot of people arguing that they should be able to pay their way to the front of the line; that their mother should not have to wait in pain if they could afford to pay for that procedure. Of course, shorter wait times for them would mean longer wait times for everyone else.

So we went to work and have made some remarkable improvements. One of the things is—and you can turn to slide 3—we have significantly increased the number of doctors who are working in Ontario. In 2003—well, you can see for yourself on this graph. There was an increase—in some years, a decrease—in the number of doctors working, and we have got significantly more doctors—3,400 more doctors—working in Ontario than in 2003. We've got 12,600 more nurses and 1,000 more nurse practitioners than in 2003. We have reversed the brain drain. Last year, we licensed a record number of doctors.

We have also worked very hard to improve access to care. Some 2.1 million more Ontarians now have access to a family doctor, thanks to our efforts and the commitment and the dedication of our physicians, so that now 93% of us do have a family doctor.

These results did not happen by accident. They are the result of deliberate changes and investments by our government since 2003.

We've added 260 new first-year undergraduate medical spots. We've opened the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We've opened satellite medical campuses in Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo, St. Catharines and Mississauga. We now offer the most training positions and assessments for international medical graduates, more than all other provinces combined.

We now have 6,264 internationally trained doctors practising in Ontario. They are a very important part of our health care system. More than one quarter of our

physician workforce is actually doctors who were trained outside of Canada.

We've had an increase of 13% more family doctors and 18% more specialists than in 2003.

We're also working hard to connect patients to primary care, through our Health Care Connect service. Health Care Connect is for people who don't have a family doctor. They can register with Health Care Connect. They are connected with a nurse, who understands their health care needs and connects them with family doctors or nurse practitioners who are taking new patients and who can meet the needs of those patients. We have matched more than 150,000 people through Health Care Connect. It is proving to be a tremendous success.

We're also helping Ontarians find the most appropriate care, as close to home as possible, through the Health Care Options website and phone number. The Health Care Options website is one where you can enter your address or your postal code; you can indicate how far you're prepared to travel; you can click on the box on what kind of care it is you're looking for; and it will tell you—it's powered by Google Maps, so you actually see in your community where that care is that you need. Whether it's a family health team, a nurse practitioner-led clinic, an after-hours clinic, a walk-in clinic, you can find out information in your community. We have significantly expanded Health Care Options. What we learned is that people who work in health care knew about them but the public didn't. So now, through this website, we're able to teach people about what options are available in their community, in many cases preventing a visit to the emergency department. I put in my own address at home in London, and I was surprised to see what services were available, if someone needed stitches or an X-ray, that might prevent a visit to an emergency department.

0930

A part of what we have done, as well, is we've created 200 family health teams in Ontario. They are providing care to 2.8 million Ontarians. This is a model of care that I can tell you the patients very much appreciate, the interdisciplinary holistic care that they get at a family health team. I can tell you that the health care providers very much enjoy working in an environment where they can turn to other health care experts who have expertise that they might not have themselves to get people the care they need.

These are interdisciplinary teams of health care providers. They include doctors. They include nurses, nurse practitioners. They include registered dietitians, pharmacists, social workers and other health care providers. The care depends on the community, so they have a plan of what kind of care they want to provide. They look at the resources in the community and they bring in the health care professionals who can provide that comprehensive care.

On the slide, what you can do is see what has happened here. This is a result from the Health Care Options website that shows what is available right in this neighbourhood. You can do that in any neighbourhood in the

province of Ontario. If you haven't already done it, I urge you to do it and I also urge you to make sure that your constituency staff are familiar with Health Care Options, because it truly is a wealth of information and starts to make sense of the health care system for people.

Another very important innovation in Ontario is our nurse practitioner-led clinics. We've created 26 nurse practitioner-led clinics, NPLCs. Twenty-three of them are open, seeing patients. The others are on their way. Some of them that are open—I see Kim Craitor nodding. He and I actually had the honour of visiting a nurse practitioner-led clinic in Niagara Falls. It's a very exciting innovation in health care. When these 26 NPLCs are up and running, they will serve 40,000 Ontarians. Again, patients who are taking advantage of the NPLCs are very pleased with the care that they are getting from nurse practitioners in their community.

On family health teams, just so you get a sense of the scope of them: 2,400 doctors are associated with family health teams and 1,700 interdisciplinary health care professionals; as I say, nurse practitioners, social workers, dietitians and so on are part of those teams.

The NPLCs, again, work as an inter-professional team. They focus on providing family health care. Some offer obesity programs, smoking cessation programs, cancer screening programs, provide house calls and access to care for patients when they need it.

As we look forward to innovation in our health care system, one thing that we are very committed to doing is increasing the scope of practice for our health care providers. We need all of our health care professionals working at their full scope of practice, and that's why we've expanded the scope of practice for a range of health care professionals. The winners are the patients, because patients will be able to access the care they need from the appropriate professional.

Some of our health care professionals have been very highly trained but unable to put that training to work. We are changing that. Nurse practitioners are now allowed to prescribe drugs, set a fracture, order X-rays, use ultrasound. Pharmacists have benefitted from increased scope of practice. I can tell you, some of you will remember, that there was a time when pharmacists were not particularly happy with this government. That is changing dramatically as we increase the scope of practice for pharmacists.

When we eliminated professional allowances, our commitment to pharmacists was that we would now start to pay them for providing care to patients. We eliminated the professional allowances, but we are now paying pharmacists to provide services that are important to patients.

MedsCheck has been an extraordinary success. MedsCheck is available to people who are on a number of different medications, who are being discharged from hospital, who live in long-term-care homes. What we know is that having that right management of medication is essential to the health of patients with complex conditions. So we now are paying pharmacists to review



medications for patients. That can be done in their office, in their pharmacy—or we now pay pharmacists to actually go into people's homes. If they can't come into the pharmacy easily, the pharmacist will be paid to go into a home to review all of the medications, including over-the-counter medications, so that people are taking the right medications at the right time. The pharmacist is putting their very extensive training to work. In many cases we're finding, once a meds check is done, that people are actually taking more drugs than they need. So it's actually reducing the number of medications that people are required to take.

We are excited about further expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists. We're looking at giving pharmacists the ability to provide immunizations for people over the age of five. That is a recommendation that is out for consultation right now. So we see a continually expanding role for pharmacists.

Midwives also are able to now do things through their scope of practice that they had been trained to do but were not allowed to do until we expanded their scope of practice. Of course, when it comes to midwives we're very excited. We are seeking proposals now to open stand-alone birth centres so that women who are giving birth to a child will have an option to give birth in a clinic. Their options currently are to give birth at home or in hospital. We think there's a real opportunity to provide a place where people can have their babies in an appropriate clinic. This is something that I think we're very excited about.

Community health centres: This is another way that we have significantly increased access to care. Community health centres provide care, often to vulnerable populations, to people for whom the social determinants of health are playing a significant negative role in their health. We have doubled the number of CHCs in this province. We are very excited about opportunities in CHCs. They are integrated with other social and health services. In 2003, we had 44 CHCs with 10 satellites; now we have 75 CHCs and 27 satellites. They serve 300,000 people across the province. As I've said often, those CHCs are located in areas where they serve people living in poverty, immigrants to Canada, people facing real barriers to getting the health care that they need. So we're excited about how far we've come with CHCs, and we're also excited about their potential.

Another direction of the government is giving people access to more health care information from sources other than their doctor—not that that information is not important, but we think we can supplement the information that people get. I mentioned our Health Care Options website, a one-stop website where patients can learn more about the health care services in their community. We want health tools, resources and information to be a mouse click or a phone call away for the people of this province.

0940

Our Telehealth phone number has allowed Ontarians to connect with a registered nurse who can answer gen-

eral health questions. They can help assess the symptoms. They can give advice about whether you should stay home and what steps to take, whether you should make an appointment with your family doctor or whether you should go to the emergency department. I think that Telehealth is a service that many families use. Certainly in my own family, it is a service that my daughters with small children use regularly. They want, of course, to do what's best for their child, but they don't want to go to the emergency department if it's not an emergency. Telehealth, I think, is a wonderful service. Last year, Telehealth received nearly 750,000 calls. Ontarians are getting the answers they need and the advice they need.

Diabetes: Diabetes is a complex condition. It is one where management of the disease can make a real difference in the outcomes of the progression of diabetes. We are working very hard to support Ontarians in their efforts to manage diabetes. We've increased the number of diabetes education teams. We had 220; we're now at 321. We've got diabetes regional coordination centres in each of the 14 LHINs. On our website, at [ontario.ca/diabetes](http://ontario.ca/diabetes), patients can find very, very good information on diabetes, how to manage diabetes and what supports there are in their communities.

We've also increased access to cancer screening. We've launched Canada's first province-wide colorectal cancer screening program. We've expanded the Ontario Breast Screening Program to provide an additional 90,000 screens, and we now include women from the ages of 30 to 69 who are at high risk for breast cancer. Those women will get an enhanced screening protocol. We know that the sooner you can catch cancer, the better, so we want to make sure that women who are at high risk of breast cancer get that enhanced screening so that steps can be taken immediately if, in fact, there are any problems that come to light as a result of that screening.

I want to talk about our wait times strategy. As I said earlier, Ontario had unacceptably long wait times, and I know that many people, particularly those who were MPPs and that—well, for me, from 2003 to 2007, but prior to that, we heard very, very sad stories about people who were waiting unacceptably long to get the procedure that they needed. We went to work when we were elected in 2003, and we have gone from not even measuring wait times to now, where we have public reporting on wait times for a range of procedures in every hospital. It's online. People can go and check what the wait time is in their hospital, and where they could go, if they were prepared to travel, to get their procedure done more quickly.

We've invested significantly in our wait times strategy. We've invested \$1.7 billion to reduce those wait times, but I can tell you, the beneficiaries of that are the people of this province, no one benefitting more than our seniors. We have achieved significant wait time reductions. We've taken half a year off wait times for cataracts. We've taken 150 days off wait times for hip replacements. Knee replacement wait times are down 209 days. CT scans are down 48 days. MRI scans are down 37

days. We are making measurable progress. They say if you can't measure it, you can't manage it. We were not measuring wait times. We now measure, and not only do we measure, we publicly report. We have driven those wait times down. When wait times are too high—and there are still some wait times in some parts of the province that are too high—it enables us to make strategic investments to bring those wait times down. We've had difficulty getting MRI wait times down, but we've now been able to target investments to get wait times down where they were too high. We have gone from worst to first on our wait times—and I think three different organizations have acknowledged that Ontario is leading the country when it comes to our wait times. I think that the people of Ontario deserve timely access to care. If you need a new hip, I don't think you should have to spend two years in pain, perhaps not working, in order to get the procedure you need. So I'm very proud of the progress that we've made through our wait times strategy.

Another area where we have moved forward aggressively is in our capital projects. I can tell you that appropriate investments had not been made for too long. We inherited a very serious infrastructure deficit when we took office. We have invested, since we took office, \$9 billion in health care infrastructure. You will know, because I get asked in the House about it, that there are still communities that are anxious and ready for capital improvements to their hospital. We are moving as quickly as we can, but there is still unmet need, and there is no question that it is a result of historic underfunding in capital improvements in our hospitals. We've got 23 new hospitals that have been built or are being built. A hundred major capital projects have been completed or are under construction. We will continue to invest in capital infrastructure.

I now want to turn our attention to our health reality. We've already talked about our fiscal challenge. We do have a deficit that all of us would agree is unacceptably high. We have a plan to get back to balance over the next five years. We can do that, and health will do its part, because we have made significant improvements in health care since we took office. We have seen a substantial increase in health care spending. We now have a very solid foundation, so we can move forward with the fiscal restraints that are part of our responsibility.

I want to pause for a moment on slide 14. For me, this tells a very important and big story. I'm going to take a few minutes just to walk through what you're seeing before you. This is a population pyramid. We have men on the left and women on the right, and each bar represents how many people are in that age cohort currently. The solid bars are from 2010. The red line indicates how many people will be in that age group by 2036. So 25 years ahead, we know, with a very high degree of certainty, what our population age structure will look like. You can see that we will have more people at every age, but we will have not that many people more than we do today at the younger ages. Where we will see huge

growth in the number of people in certain age groups is that older age group. You can see the baby boom moving through the population. You know as well as I do that as we age, we need more from our health care system. Not only are we under significant fiscal constraints, we have a significant demographic challenge.

#### 0950

How are we going to achieve those twin fiscal and demographic goals? If you turn to the next page now—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm afraid I'm going to have to stop you there because your half-hour is up.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** My half-hour is up? Well, I hope I'll have a chance to come back. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We now go into the 20-minute rotation periods. Each party will have their opportunity in turn, starting with the Conservatives.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm going to start off where I left off last time. I was wondering if you can measure eHealth Ontario's progress with other jurisdictions. The UK has 99% of their population with electronic health records; we are wondering why Ontario is lagging behind, particularly because we've spent \$2.6 billion on eHealth records that a fraction of that actually have access to. How much is it going to cost to get us all up and running? Why are we lagging behind other jurisdictions?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** One important reason why we are lagging behind some jurisdictions—I think it's important to acknowledge that we are leading the way in Canada—is that we did not get started as soon as we should have. Other jurisdictions got started more quickly. Under the previous government there were not investments—there was not a focused success. We are making up for lost time. We are moving forward rapidly—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** But the Auditor General said we started this in the 1990s. The previous government—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, but did not achieve success. Since we were elected, we have really—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** And you've achieved success since you've been elected?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We have now got 60% of our family doctors with EMRs. We're working with the Ontario Medical Association, through their organization OntarioMD, to get more doctors signed up with electronic health records, electronic medical records, in their offices. We support physicians as they adopt and transfer to electronic health records.

There are many physicians who are reluctant to do that. We are working with them, with the OMA, to bring new physicians online. The young doctors, I would say, couldn't imagine practising medicine with paper-based records. We've still got some doctors who are not prepared to transfer their records to electronic, but we're doing everything we can, as aggressively as we can, working with physicians to get them to transfer over.

I'm very optimistic that we will achieve the goal of an EMR for every Ontarian by 2015. We are working with our partners, the Ontario Medical Association, to get there.



**Mr. Rob Leone:** So how much is it going to cost to get a 99% uptake on electronic medical records for people in the province of Ontario? We've spent \$2.5 billion to date on it; we don't have everybody—not even close to everybody—on it. How much more is it going to cost to get everyone on eHealth records?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Because electronic health records, electronic medical records, are such an important part of a strong, sustainable health care system, I think it's important that you actually acknowledge and understand that eHealth Ontario is far more than simply EMRs in family doctors' offices. It's an important part of what they do, but there is much, much more that is being done by eHealth Ontario.

Our hospitals, for example: As the deputy said, if someone goes into the emergency department—a senior or someone on the Ontario Drug Benefit plan—their drug information is available there on the drug profile viewer. All of the scans, CTs, X-rays, ultrasounds, MRIs, all the scans done in hospitals, all the diagnostic imaging in hospitals is digital now, so that can be viewed within the hospital, often within the region. In the case of ENITS, it can be shared with the specialist in another location for immediate care from the right specialist. There is significant work going on.

I can tell you that if we want a highly functioning health care system in Ontario, we must continue to invest in eHealth. There are significant net savings to the system in having electronic health records for people.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** First of all, you've previously stated a cost of \$225 million to hit our target. That was in Hansard on November 4, 2009.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Excuse me, I'm not quite sure what you're referring to.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm talking about Hansard and your previous—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Could you please—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It says "Hon. Deborah Matthews" on—if you'd like, we could provide that for you. It says here, "The eHealth strategic plan targets a 65% EMR adoption rate by primary care physicians by April 2012.... Achieving the target is thus expected to cost more than \$225 million...." That was stated on November 4, 2009, and we've just discussed earlier today that those projections of eHealth costs have now exceeded \$2.5 billion.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to go back and check, but I believe that that was the cost of the EMR adoption which is, as I have said, a small but important part of eHealth Ontario.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I want to ask questions about the drug information system, which is part of the program here. It stated in your eHealth strategy report, 2009, that your procurement was scheduled for October 2010, with a limited rollout pilot planned for April 2011 and full deployment in July 2011. I'm wondering if you could give us an idea of whether we do have full deployment of the drug information system as of July 2011.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It has been delayed. I'm going to ask the deputy to bring us up to date on where we are on the drug information system.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Well, eHealth Ontario is in the process of concluding the procurement. Off the top of my head, I don't know whether they have made a selection. I can find out as to the successful vendor. They anticipate that they'll have a medication management system, which is bigger than a drug information system, in place in the next fiscal year. Right now, we're working on an Ontario lab information system, which would have some elements of drug tracking.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So we don't have a drug information system. Is that correct?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** We don't have a comprehensive medication management system, which is beyond just a simple tracking of drugs. We do have drug tracking for all ODB recipients, so there is the basis of a drug information system right now. I believe Ontario was the first in the country to have what's called a drug profile viewer in emergency departments.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Who's delivering that? Is there a company that has been procured to deliver that?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I don't know if a company was procured, but I do know that it is now being used and has been adopted through eHealth activities and is used in every hospital. I don't know if there was a vendor, nor who that vendor might have been.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The other important item that we have up and running now is the narcotics database. We now have every prescriber, whether it's a physician or a doctor prescriber; every dispenser, so every pharmacy; and every person for whom that drug is prescribed linked up. This went live just a couple of months ago. We now can make determinations about who is prescribing more than would be considered appropriate, what pharmacies are dispensing at a rate that would raise some questions, and are there people who are getting drugs from more than one physician, going to more than one pharmacy. This is part of our narcotics strategy, to really get the information we need to control these very, very powerful drugs.

1000

**Mr. Rob Leone:** We have from your strategy report that 5% of the physicians were supposed to be able to send prescribing events to DIS by October 2011, 65% of community pharmacies were supposed to be submitting dispensing events to DIS by April 2012, and 35% of physicians were supposed to be sending ordering events to DIS by April 2012.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care reports that the fourth-largest cause of death in Ontario is preventable adverse drug reactions and that having an incomplete medication list is the primary source of medical error. eHealth anticipates that the drug information system would save \$350 million annually. Now you're telling me that we're nowhere near having that system operational?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I don't think that's fair to say, that we're not near to having it operational. I think we tried to chronicle some of the elements that are now in place, but linking those systems together in a comprehensive medication management system is under way through procurement, and we hope to have that up and running. It's in the procurement stage, as far as I know.

There's also an ePrescribing pilot taking place where 80,000 Ontarians, with their pharmacist and their physician, have that medication management system as a pilot project. That pilot project will continue until the medication management system is rolling.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The concern that I have, sir, is that we've spent a lot of money, with some of these things that were supposed to be operational simply not being there, like the DIS. I understand procurement is still in progress.

I'm going to hand it off to Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much. You know, Minister, sometimes people think that as the official opposition we have to go after the government in everything. Well, my colleagues and I believe that a good idea doesn't really care who owns it. I'll give you an example of that: family health, a great idea. It truly is. But we also see ourselves as the wallet-watchers of Ontarians, as well. Based on that, I'd like to refer again back to eHealth and some of the things that we have uncovered, because what we're finding is that the eHealth bill has doubled to just over \$2 billion, with very little to show as a result. Of course, the Auditor General pointed that out in his report in 2009, stating that the government had failed to properly oversee the eHealth initiative.

I want to talk about the drug information system again, as my colleague was referencing. For those who may not fully understand what the drug information system is, just a brief definition of it is simply this: a comprehensive record of Ontario's patients' medications, as you've talked about, that would save lives by reducing prescription errors—he talked about over-prescription being the fourth-largest reason for people dying—of course, reducing prescription errors and drug overdoses and reducing fraud related to prescription narcotic addition.

I think that the tools that are in place—obviously we know that they haven't been fully developed yet. Let me ask you this: Who's building the drug information system at this point?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think what the deputy said was that that is in procurement now, so we don't have an answer for you. We will undertake to get an update on where that process is.

I think it's also important to acknowledge that we have made significant steps. We have a drug profile viewer, so that all seniors, all people on ODSP and OW do have that—it's not a fully fledged drug management system, but those physicians in emergency departments can see what drugs that person is on.

You talked about reducing fraud for narcotics. We have that in place now and that is operational now. We have made significant steps forward. We keep hearing

about the Auditor General's report. I think it's important to remind you that \$800 million of the total \$1 billion went to the ill-fated Smart Systems agencies that the Liberals inherited from the Tories, the auditor noted in his report.

We are moving forward. We are making up for lost time. We believe this is the right thing to do, and we are making the appropriate investments to get there. This work is under way. It's difficult work, but it is work that is vitally important for the people of this province. We've remained committed to the objectives that have been outlined by eHealth Ontario.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We do know that you have spent over a billion dollars while—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** With significant results—60% of family docs; we're on our way to improve that over the next few years. By 2015, we want an EMR for every Ontarian. We are working towards that goal. There is no light switch you can just turn on to make that happen. Every physician who signs up goes through a significant change in their office. We are working with our doctors to continually improve and increase the number of docs who have EMRs and who are using it to its full power, because EMRs have tremendous power and not all of the physicians who are hooked up are using the full scope of electronic medical records.

I'm excited about the future of eHealth. We are making the right investments. Those investments will pay great dividends and are paying great dividends.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Back to the drug information system, though, and who is building it—and perhaps it hasn't been procured yet. But we do have it on good authority that Telus Health Solutions is poised to be awarded two major eHealth contracts: the drug information system and the ConnectingGTA initiative. These two contracts will amount to roughly \$70 million.

We've also been told by whistle-blowers at eHealth, who are disgusted with your management, that two other firms, namely IBM and Accenture, walked away from the DIS project due to a number of concerns. Can you please elaborate on the situation? Why did IBM and Accenture walk away?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I cannot confirm nor comment on those allegations. I don't know if the deputy has anything to add to that.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I don't know the procurement details that you're referring to—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So you're not aware that Telus Health Solutions may in fact be poised to be awarded those two contracts?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I wouldn't be, nor would the minister, in terms of delving into a procurement process or influencing or accessing information during a procurement process.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would never get involved in a procurement process—never.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I think that IBM and Accenture are walking away because of the risk factor involved. That may be very fair to say.



Are you aware, Minister, of who's running Telus Health Solutions?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Perhaps I should, but I'm not sure that I do.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, perhaps I could help you with that. Telus absorbed Courtyard Group and two senior executives, Michael Guerriere and David Wattling, two central figures in the eHealth scandal. My question is, do you think it's appropriate for two of the architects of the last eHealth scandal to be awarded major health contracts?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** If you are suggesting that there be political interference in the procurement process, I completely, unequivocally reject that advice. If you are giving me advice that certain individuals—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm not giving you advice. I'm just—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, you are suggesting that there be political interference in a procurement process. I reject that. It is an irresponsible approach.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We're just asking, Minister, if it would be correct and the right thing to do. You see, cronyism and scandalous overspending are still commonplace at eHealth, aren't they?

Will you table for this committee the expenses of all eHealth employees, particularly the management executive and board?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I believe there was a motion that this committee passed last week that requested that information, and we will endeavour to get that information for you.

I need to, however—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Just yes or no.

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**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Excuse me. You've made some very serious allegations, some very serious allegations. What I will do—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, ma'am, I have, but this is very serious too, and I know you know that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We will endeavour to reply to the committee's request to get that information.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We have about one minute.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. The Auditor General's report states that the DIS, the drug information system, was supposed to be completed over four years and implemented by 2013. It's 2012, and the vendor hasn't been determined. What's the reasoning for that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will turn to my deputy for any information he might have on that.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I would have to get those details from eHealth Ontario, but I think some of the elements in large system development would be known to you. I don't need to repeat those. A pilot program was started, as well as an approach that has been implemented through sub-systems that track drug information.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I was just hoping, though, sir, that you would be able to track all of that and be aware—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I have to stop you both there because the time is up.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That's what I'm asking.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Think about it for the next time. The time is up.

We're going to go to Ms. Gélinas, and after that, I'm going to suggest that we take a 10-minute recess for the benefit of all concerned. Ms. Gélinas, you have 20 minutes, and then we're going to have a recess.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sounds good. I wanted to ask a few questions about oral health, the first one having to do with CINOT, children in need of treatment. I was wondering, what was the budget allocation specifically for CINOT in 2011-12, and how much was actually spent? If we have this available today, that would be great.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'll just give the deputy a moment to see if he's got it here. Otherwise, we will endeavour to get it for you.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I'll have to get that information. I don't readily have the CINOT data.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If it comes as we talk, feel free to throw it in at any time. I would be interested in knowing what was budgeted in 2011-12, what was actually spent in 2011-12, and what is budgeted for this year, in 2012-13, and if you would know if it went up, down or stayed the same. Is there hope that you find it right away, or should I just be patient and we'll get it within 30 days or—

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Between those two, I will definitely have it.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay; sounds good.

A similar question regarding the Healthy Smiles Ontario program: What was budgeted in 2011-12, how much did we actually spend in 2011-12, what are the budget allocations for 2012-13, and why is it so hard to find those numbers in that big book? You don't have to answer that last question, but it's really tough to find those numbers. If they would be more easily available, it would save us all some grief.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Okay. I will take you on your advice not to answer the latter, but it is a function of the quantum of programs and the various vote item lines, as you would well know, that these funds are found; so, in the printed estimates, it is aggregated at such a level that it may not be obvious to find specific, individual-type programs like CINOT, Healthy Smiles or Aging at Home, for example, just another piece.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** But what I do want to comment on in Healthy Smiles is that this is a program that was part of our poverty reduction strategy. As you know, kids whose parents are on social assistance have access to dental care, but kids whose parents were working, but not making a lot of money, did not have access. It's for many families who are struggling to pay the rent and pay the bills and buy food. Dental care just was not able to be provided to those kids.

Healthy Smiles is a new program delivered by our public health units that is for the first time providing den-

tal care at no cost to kids in low-income families. I'm enormously proud that we've made this investment.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sounds good. Continuing in the community sector, in 2011-12, the Ministry of Health budget for the community sector received a 3% increase, and this increase was allocated to the LHINs. I was just curious to find out: Of the 3% increase that went to the community sector, how much went to the community care access centres? How much of the total amount of that 3% ended up with CCACs versus, I would say, everybody else in the community sector, and more specifically, community health centres in the community sector?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Just to clarify: You're looking for the breakdown of the 3% from CCACs versus CHCs?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** There was a 3% increase in community care. The 3% did get rolled out. I'm interested in seeing the breakdown as to—I used to know the amount; it escapes me. To make it easy, let's just say that the 3% meant that there was a \$100-million increase. Of that \$100 million, how much went to CCACs and how much went to other parts—in numbers as well as in percentages. I would appreciate knowing.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** We'll have to get that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, that would be good.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I would like to add, though, is that we made a strategic decision to increase the community sector by 4%—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** This year.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:**—this year and the next two years, while we're holding physician compensation at zero, while we're holding hospital base increases at zero. We've made a very clear strategic decision to invest more in the community sector, because we know that a greater investment in home care—not just home care, but in-home care—can bring some of those ALC patients out of hospitals.

You're from the Sudbury area. You know that there are too many people who could go home or could go to another place outside of hospital to receive the care they need but who are in hospital.

We have been very clear with the LHINs that this increased investment is not just an increase across the board to everybody in that sector. They need to be very strategic in using this increase in money to drive the kind of change we need to rebalance the health care system, to increase spending in the community as we hold others flat.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It's a little bit fuzzy as to who is in the community care sector and who is out. For the 4% that will be rolling out for the next three years, who can the LHINs envision using that 4%? Who's in, who's out?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It is community-based services: community-based mental health; supportive housing; home care. We could get you the list of what's in there. It's not hospital, not physician, not drug; it's community-based services. The whole idea is, let's get people the care they need, as close to home as possible, out of institutions whenever possible.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would be able to get a list of who those transfer payment agencies could be, as in who is in the community sector and who is not?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What's captured in that line.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I think the transfer payment agencies would be several hundred, so it would be advantageous for us if it was about who's captured in that line of funding. Long-term care is not, for example. It's strictly that community basis. We would be able to tell you, "The 4% is going to flow to these types of community transfer payment partners."

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That would be acceptable.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** If you'd turn to page 16 on the slide deck, that is a breakdown of where we spend health care dollars: what sectors receive what share of the health care pie. You will see that that community sector represents, I think, 6.2% of the budget. We're really focusing on that sector, because we think that the appropriate investments there will take pressure off other parts of our health care system.

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**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Then I would be interested in seeing who makes up that 6.2%.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Sure.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, and each of the LHINs will have information on their websites that describe their investments, as well.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I might add on that last point, if I could, that the allocation will vary by LHIN because of local need.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I understand. Talking a little bit about hospitals, we've made it clear, zero percent overall in the hospital envelope with—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, zero percent on the base, but we are increasing investments on the wait times strategy, cancer care, where populations are growing, if there is a growth in services—but the base is zero.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Can you provide a breakdown in amounts, by hospital in each of the LHINs, for all 152 hospital corporations, of base funding for each and every one of them, as well as additional funding for those particular hospitals? So whether it be additional funding for post-construction or for high growth or for wait times—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So the one-time funding?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Not necessarily one-time; I want the operating as well as any additional funding that goes to those different hospitals, that comes from the ministry and ends up there.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It's feasible? Okay, that would be very helpful. Thank you.

Do we know—I call it other sources of funding, like the nurses for offload delays. We had the offload nursing positions. Can we find out exactly where they went?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That would be helpful too; even a chart with—I'm interested by names of hospitals, as to



which hospital got one and which didn't and if they got more than one; basically a breakdown as to where they went.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Okay.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay; sounds good.

The LHINs have been doing some consolidation; that's the way they call it in my LHIN, anyway, but I think it's pretty standard. They've been consolidating programs and services. Sometimes it's a program or service that was within the hospital, sometimes it's in the community, and sometimes it's both of them together. Do we have a list of where this has happened province-wide? What kind of consolidation of services and programs have happened, but specifically touching hospitals? Have all of them—the big, the small, the rural, the northern—been basically consolidated the same?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** As an accounting consolidation, in that context? Absolutely.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No, as programs and services. The LHINs have made integration decisions that often touch hospital programs and services, and I'm curious to know, did we keep track of those on a hospital basis? How many of those integration decisions have touched the 152 hospitals, specifically their programs and services?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Do you have an example of an integration decision? That's sort of throwing me off in the sense of the LHINs' role with respect to integration.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm trying to use their language. I never call it integration decisions; I call it consolidation of programs and services. There used to be physiotherapy offered in a specific community hospital. The LHINs looked at it and found out that the community was well served in physiotherapy services, so they basically—when the hospital came forward, they called it an integration decision. But call it consolidation, call it whatever, it's basically a program and service that used to be offered in our hospital that is not offered in our hospital anymore because they were being well served by the community side of the equation. I'm curious to see how many of those—I will call them consolidations of programs and services. Are you starting to see where I'm going?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How many of those have happened in our hospitals, let's say, for the last—2011-12, or if you know 2012-13 going forward. Those are programs and services that used to be offered in the hospital. They either are not or they're offered in a different way or they're offered in a partnership. So when the LHINs have made those decisions, where have they been done?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** That one I'm going to have to have a concerted chat with staff about. I don't know the answer, and we'll have to determine how we can compile that information.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important to acknowledge that this is the work of the LHINs.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, it is.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Each LHIN is entrusted with the responsibility of getting best value, best care for patients. The LHINs will have that information. We will see what we can get. Again, I think that you might get more robust information if you work directly with the LHINs. We'll get you what we can, but I have a feeling you're going to want information that probably the LHINs are best equipped to share with you.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If that information is shared with the ministry, if that kind of planning is shared with the ministry and you have that information, then I would like it. If you don't, then I have the numbers of the 14 LHINs and I can do the phone calls.

Another thing that I was wondering—I know that the LHINs know this, but I'm wondering if they report back to you in your stewardship capacity—is the number of hospital beds that are in operation. Do you keep track of this? Do the LHINs or the hospitals themselves let you know the number of beds in operation at any given time—the example that you gave earlier on, that sometimes in the summer they will close a wing, 25 beds in med surgery or whatever. Do they inform you? Do we keep track? Do we know?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We know how many hospital beds are operational. There could be some occasions when there's a temporary change. We do track the number of beds that are being operated in our hospitals and our long-term-care homes, our acute-care hospitals, our complex continuing care hospitals, our assess-and-restore beds. There are a range of different kinds of beds, and we do keep numbers on each type of bed that's open.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That would be helpful. I would like it by each type of bed, the different clinical areas: How many hospital beds do we have for peds or for ob-gyn or—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Now you're getting into—I'm not sure we have that. We'll see what we can—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You would just have acute-care or complex continuing care? Or do you have it drilled down to clinical areas?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I don't know how far it drills down. It would also be at a point in time, because daily and monthly operation decisions are being—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Pick a point in time, and I'll be happy with whatever you pick as long as it's not 10 years old. Within the last—2011-12—just to give us a baseline as to how many. If you trend them, then I would also be interested in knowing where things are changing.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** There's no question that procedures that used to keep people in the hospital for a week are now being done as day surgery. So health care is changing and that's good.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Absolutely.

Actually, if I had my druthers, I would ask for July 1, 2012, but I will take whatever date you can give me that is as close to July 1, 2012, as possible.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What about July 23?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm also looking for the hospital operating funding for 2012-13, as well as 2011-12

and 2010-11—strictly the operating funding that went to our hospitals. You can give this to me either breaking down by LHINs—or even if it's one big number, I'll live with that, too. I would prefer it by LHIN.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** By LHIN or by hospital?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, if you have it broken down by hospital, it's even better.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I would imagine you would prefer it by hospital. I think we can provide it by hospital for the 2012-13 budgetary allocation and, I believe, for 2010-11 and 2011-12 as well.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** When we look at it—what I'm able to get from that little book that's hard to read—it looks like the operating funding of the hospital, the line that is used, keeps going up, but I'm not too sure what accounts for the growth. Do you know?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Generally, there would be a line of strict growth on the base. Last year it was 1.5%, I believe; this year it's frozen at 0%. Then there are additional funds that come to individual hospitals. That might be PCOP, the post-construction operating that you've identified. It would definitely be any provincial program money that would be for special types of activities that might be unique in a particular series of hospitals but not apply to all hospitals, and then, of course, surgical wait-time monies that are allocated. Lastly, another amount would be the cancer surgery allocations that come out of Cancer Care Ontario. They look at the volumes and the types of surgeries for cancer. Some of that is wait-time; some of it is not.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How long do I have, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Very little. Twenty seconds.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Do we know if public health will be integrated into the LHINs, and if so, when?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's not part of our action plan right now. We are looking to integrate primary care planning. There are certainly people who advocate that public health should be there, but they are, as you know, creatures of the municipalities. What I think is very important, though, is that the LHINs and public health are working together to achieve best possible outcomes for best possible value.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So no—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We're going to stop you right there.

Mr. McNeely.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister, for being here.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, we were going to have a break.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Oh, great.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I thought you had a point of order or something you wanted to—

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** No, no. I was suggesting a break. I didn't realize that. Great.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We are going to break for 10 minutes. Please, everybody be promptly back here at 20 minutes to.

*The committee recessed from 1032 to 1044.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We'll call everybody to order, and we will start. It is now the opportunity of the government. Mr. McNeely, I understand you have the first question.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Chair. I was very interested in your presentation, Minister, when you were coming to the demographic challenges. I can see that persons my age are going to about double by 2036, and the ones who are paying the bills are only going to go up 15% or something. I would like you to complete your presentation, and I'd like to see the rest of the information that you have provided this morning.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you very much, Mr. McNeely. I do think that this demographic challenge really does underlie every decision that we have to make in health care. We want to provide the best possible care for people today, but we always have to be looking ahead to see what's coming. What does the future look like? What is our health care system going to need? How is our health care system going to need to change, to reflect the needs of the people of the population at the time?

When we embarked on universal health care 50 years ago, our population was much, much younger, and the demands on the health care system tended to be more episodic. You had something wrong with you; you went in and you got it fixed, and then you were healthy again.

As our population ages, the very nature of our health care system has to change to reflect that. As people age, and as health care improves, people are living longer, and they're living longer with more complex conditions, and our health care system to date has not adapted to reflect the changing needs of our population.

This slide on page 14 is pretty sobering, for exactly the reason you pointed out. The needs of people in their 70s, in their 80s, in their 90s—and just look at the number of people who are going to be over 100 years old—an extraordinary increase in people who will have demands of our health care system that we simply aren't poised to meet right now.

If you look just at the money, the next slide demonstrates what would happen if we took the per capita spend by age of today and then multiplied it by the population structure of 2030, just 20 years from now. You'll see the blue line represents what we spend by age group today. The green line is what we will spend by age group 20 years from now if we continue to do everything the way we do it today. The answer is, we would need an increase in our budget of 50%. That's not accounting for inflation; that's not accounting for new medical advancements. It's just, if we had the population of 2030 to care for today, how much more money would we need? It would be an increase of 50%. This is a very sober reminder that we need to make sure that we're getting the best value for every tax dollar.

We know that we can do so much better for people as they age. We have seniors who have a number of different doctors that they see for different parts of their body that need attention. That care is not nearly as coordinated



as it could be. We know that we could be a lot more proactive when it comes to health care.

We asked Dr. David Walker from Queen's University to help us understand what we needed to do to address the ER/ALC challenges. He came back and said, "I can help you with that, but I need to broaden the scope."

The problem is, we're not taking as good care as we should, and could, of our seniors. That's why we're moving forward with the seniors strategy. We want to support more people in their home, keep them out of hospital, get them out of hospital as soon as they're ready to go home. We want them to go home with the most robust supports: what they need to stay healthy, prevent hospital readmissions, make sure that they're on the right medications and they're taking those medications properly.

We know that if we took a more holistic, integrated approach to health care for our seniors, we could provide much better care at a lower cost. That's why we are really driving change that not everyone is happy with.

**1050**

Many physicians aren't happy that we're not increasing the envelope for physician compensation. Some of our hospitals would like to see a higher increase in their budgets. But I tell you, if we're going to drive the change that will keep our health care system universal for future generations, we have to do a better job of caring for elderly people. It's as simple as that.

On slide 16, this is where we spend money in health care: 34.5 % in our hospitals—more than a third of our health care dollars go to hospitals—doctors, 23%; long-term-care homes, 8%; community care, 6.2%. That "Other" category includes things like public health and mental health. This is how much money we have to spend. That pie will grow a little bit, but it will grow less than we have been used to seeing. Where do we have to shift spending within this pie to get the best outcomes for people? That is what our action plan is all about.

We know we can get better value for the money we spend. If you talk to anyone who works on the front lines of health care, they will all tell you that there are ways where we can spend money more effectively for better patient care. We need to listen to people on the front lines. We need to respond to the issues that they raise and make the changes that will be uncomfortable for some, but we need to drive change.

If we value universal health care, if we want to be able to pass on what I consider to be the greatest gift that people in public life gave us, universal health care, if we want to pass that on to the next generation, we must drive change. We have no option.

That's why we introduced the action plan. You've heard the three pillars: keeping Ontario healthy by focusing more on prevention, a stronger role for family health care, and ensuring that Ontarians get access when they need it to their primary health care provider. We have to make sure that people are getting the right care—that is, care that is evidence-based—at the right time—and that is very often earlier than they're getting it now, particularly when it comes to mental health—in the right

place—that's all about, if you don't need to be in hospital, we don't want you in hospital. We want to give you the support you need to move out of hospital and get back home where you're the most comfortable and where you'll make the greatest recovery. We know that when people spend too long in hospital, their condition actually declines at a fairly rapid rate. So we need to get people back home, participating in their home, in their family, in their community. Making those investments to get people home is the right thing to do for our seniors. That basically is where we're going.

Another piece of our action plan that I'd just like to touch on is the notion that there are procedures that are done in hospitals now that don't need to be done in hospitals. They could be done outside of hospitals in a stand-alone clinic. So we are looking at options. They need to be not-for-profit clinics because that's where we'll get the best value. It will provide faster access. It will provide higher quality or as-high quality, and we'll get better value for that money.

I had the opportunity to visit the Kensington Eye Institute, where all they do is cataract surgery and specialized eye care. Because they've got one focus and one focus only, they're able to provide that care in a way that works very, very well for patients.

Our goal is to make Ontario the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old. There's no reason we can't achieve that goal. We have everything we need here in Ontario. We've got brilliant, dedicated health care professionals. Our doctors are second to none. Our nurses, our various health care providers are superb. We need to let them do their job. We have everything we need to make Ontario the healthiest place to grow up and grow old, and we're going to get there by driving better value for our health care dollars and focusing on quality.

So that's our big-picture challenge and every year, every day, we want to move closer to that goal of having the system balanced, where the investments are in the right place.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Minister. I just know how many wonderful things our hospitals, our doctors and our health professionals do. We had the story this past weekend of the young lady from Ottawa who had the double lung transplant, and that was just marvellous, what happened here in Toronto.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** An inspiration.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Chair, I have some questions that I would like to direct to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Arlene King, if we can go there now. If she could come up to the table, please.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** We will see if we can get her—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Oh, she's here? There she is.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Dr. King, for the purposes of Hansard, if you could just state your name so they have the right—

**Dr. Arlene King:** My name is Dr. Arlene King, and I'm the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. McNeely, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Dr. King, for being here. My first question is that anti-vaccine sentiments seem to exist in Ontario and across the world. What can you tell us about the importance of immunization and publicly funded vaccines in Ontario?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Immunization is probably the most effective and cost-effective health intervention that we've invested in over the last 100 years. Ontario has continued to invest in introducing new vaccines to protect the health of the population. Specifically, last summer we actually introduced a couple of new vaccines to protect the health of infants and young children and also expanded the use of other vaccines to adults as well.

I certainly am aware and acknowledge the fact that there are in some areas increased concerns about the safety of our vaccines, but they have certainly been proven to be among the most effective and safest of our health interventions in terms of protecting the health of the population.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** We still have a couple of months of summer left, but I imagine that you're working hard to ensure that Ontarians are protected from the flu. What can you tell us about this year's upcoming flu program?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Again, we never know and can never predict exactly what our flu season is going to look like. I don't have a crystal ball, but we know it's going to come, so we do a lot of work, year-round actually, to continue to improve our publicly funded influenza program. Of course, we're in the process of preparing to deliver our Universal Influenza Immunization Program again in the fall, with constant attention to how we can improve our uptake rates in all parts of our population—an important intervention in terms of saving lives and reducing the burden on the health system as well.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** To change to another subject, there are a number of communities in Ontario that have been debating the issue of fluoride in drinking water, Orillia being the most recent. Can you explain why this is such an important issue from a public health perspective?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Again, oral health is extremely important. You're probably all aware of that. From my perspective it's key, because I just issued a report on oral health in Ontario. Fluoridation specifically is one component of a comprehensive, population-based oral health program that really is an equitable factor. It reaches every Ontarian. It enables the protection of teeth not only just in young children but, again, reaches adults as well. With growing concerns related to root cavities, particularly in elderly people, reaching all segments of the population is really important. That, in conjunction of course with the individual one-on-one preventive interventions that we offer through programs like Healthy Smiles Ontario, for instance, and CINOT, is a really important package in terms of optimizing the oral health of Ontarians.

It's not just about teeth; it's a lot more than cavities, to quote the title of my report. It's also a good way to ensure that we improve our overall health status. It's harder to

eat when your teeth aren't good. It's particularly hard to eat when you've got—trying to eat fruits and vegetables, either as children or as older adults. That's why oral health is important and fluoridation is important. It's a tried and true method of trying to promote the oral health of the population in an equitable fashion.

**1100**

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Have you been dealing with—I'm sorry? Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd just like to add on the fluoridation—and excuse me if I'm interrupting you, but I think it's really important that people think about who is most negatively impacted by the removal of fluoridation from water.

We know that fluoridation is naturally occurring in some parts of Ontario. In other parts, a very small amount of fluoride is added. The people who benefit the most from that added fluoridation are kids in low-income families, kids who cannot access the dental care that kids who grow up in families with dental programs are able to access. This is an issue that impacts all of us, but the most heavily impacted are the people with the lowest incomes. I just think it's important in this fluoride debate that we introduce the concept that those least able to afford dental care are the most seriously impacted.

I have a little bit of a vested interest. My grandfather Jack Matthews was mayor of Brantford, the first city in Canada to introduce fluoride. That was a decision he made as mayor. It's an issue that I follow closely, but I really do think that if we can prevent kids from getting cavities in a very, very safe way, then we should do that.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** To go back to the medical officer of health, how are you working with the municipalities to make sure that the right information, the right feedback from the municipalities is being used?

**Dr. Arlene King:** This is a really important question, because I think it's a good example of how we in the centre are collaborating closely with the local health units to ensure that people get the right information. I'm aware of the fact that there is a lot of misinformation out there that I think is potentially a source of confusion for local decision-makers. That's why, first of all, prior to issuing my report, we've been working very, very closely with Health Canada on ensuring that the health units have all of the questions and answers that are evidence-based in response to the questions that they've received. Subsequent to that, I did my Oral Health report to ensure that there was a good understanding of oral health and the contribution of fluoridation to that activity.

I've had the privilege of going out to many municipal governments throughout the province of Ontario to lend support to my colleagues as they are making arguments in support of maintaining fluoridation or, alternatively, writing letters to provide the support that is needed to ensure that, again, decision-makers have all of the information that they need.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Fluorosis has been raised as an issue. I hear that this can be one of the side effects of too much fluoride. What are your comments there?



**Dr. Arlene King:** Certainly, fluorosis is a recognized side effect of having too much fluoride. That being said, there was a study done in Canada in 2007, and the amount of fluorosis is, first of all, on the decline, and secondly, it was so negligible, they were not able to report on it in terms of severe fluorosis.

Most fluorosis that occurs, either mild or moderate—it really is just a matter of discolouration. It doesn't actually affect the functioning of the teeth. But in terms of anything severe, even moderate or severe, there wasn't enough fluorosis in the country identified that they could even count it on the Canadian Community Health Survey abstracts.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** So why is oral health so important, then, to you as a public health official?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Well, I think it's really unrecognized. I think that, by and large, the mouth is largely disconnected from the rest of the human body, so I felt it was important to comment on the fact that the mouth is an important contributor to our overall health, to the prevention of chronic diseases and to our overall well-being.

The WHO has certainly cited this evidence-based information that oral health is really important to our overall well-being as individuals and our overall health status. I wanted to ensure that Ontarians had that understanding.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to have to stop you there. The Conservatives now have 20 minutes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Doctor, interesting statistics with regard to immunization, something that perhaps we could have an interesting discussion on a little bit later on. However, I would again like to direct my question to the minister.

Minister, we're back on the drug information system. This should have been procured by 2009. You're three years late. And again, I guess my question is, what happened? Who is being held accountable for being three years late?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** A few things I think you would be interested in knowing: The procurement is through Infrastructure Ontario, so they are responsible for the procurement for eHealth Ontario. They are concluding the procurement process for the drug information system. The next phase is the negotiation of a contract, which typically takes two to three months. The design-and-build phase follows the signing of the contract.

We are on track for limited release by about June 2013, and we'll ramp up from there. "Limited release" means tools like ePrescribing will be used by a collection of physicians and pharmacies. We'll ramp up from there, very much like electronic medical records, ramping up uptake.

The drug profile viewer, which we've talked about, is operational in 245 hospital sites. I think it's important to acknowledge that that part of the drug system is operational—20 community health centres. It provides prescription drug information and medication histories for 2.6 million Ontario Drug Benefit recipients. It's oper-

ational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That work is operational.

We've got 80,000 patients who are part of a pilot now in the electronic prescribing initiative. It's at the Georgian Bay Family Health Team, the group health centre, and they are demonstrating the advantages of a medication management system.

We are under way with the procurement, and we are looking forward to the release of this.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. Here are the facts, Minister, as we know them. DIS was supposed to undergo a limited rollout in April 2011. At that time, you hadn't even announced the pre-qualified bidders.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Point of order, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Point of order.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Sorry, Mr. Nicholls. I was wondering: We don't have Dr. King on the ministerial staff list that was provided on the agenda, but there are some questions that we would like to ask, if she's still available to continue sitting at this committee. Is there any provision that we could request her presence here?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** If you're doing that now, I would ask that she be made available. She's not on the list, and that's correct; I was surprised to see her here. But since she has already given opinion, I think all sides are entitled to hear from her if they choose to do so. Would you like her in this round, or would you like her later, or—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** We have some questions this round as well.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. Dr. King, I would ask, since you have arrived, that you stay for the balance, until it's indicated that you are not required any longer.

**Dr. Arlene King:** Okay.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Thank you.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Again, let me just reiterate my previous statement, Minister. DIS was supposed to undergo a limited rollout pilot in April 2011. At that time, you hadn't even announced the pre-qualified bidders.

Then, the DIS should have been actually fully deployed by July 2011; that's a year ago. Again, at that time—the bidders were only announced on July 5 of last year.

By October of last year, only 5% of physicians were supposed to be sending prescribing events to the DIS. Right now, 0% are doing so.

By April of this year, 65% of community pharmacies were supposed to be submitting dispensing events to the DIS. Well, that number is 0% at this point in time. And then by April 2012, 35% of physicians were to be sending ordering events to the DIS, and again, currently 0% are capable of doing so.

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Minister, this isn't a disaster; eHealth is a complete and utter joke at this time. What do you have to say for yourself and for the ministry and the state of current events?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** eHealth is a vital, essential, necessary component of having a sustainable health care system for the future of Ontario. I cannot stress enough how important it is that we move forward in a responsible way to implement each of the elements that will get us to where we need to get to.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The only thing that's growing, Minister, is the cost to taxpayers, with zero benefit at this point in time. With the scheduling—and you set the schedules—we're behind the times quite significantly. Again, when we talk about the all-encompassing eHealth, we're looking at over \$2 billion. But we're talking about the drug information system at this point.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have to disagree with your suggestion that any taxpayer dollars have been—I forget the word you used—spent on this. Is it late? Yes, it is late. Nobody is suggesting otherwise. Is it essential that it move forward? Yes. Have we got elements of it up and running? Yes.

I would be more than happy to get you specific answers from eHealth Ontario, from Greg Reed, who I'm sure could offer more detailed information. But what I can tell you is that elements of this are operational.

We have the narcotics database up and running today. We are collecting information on who is prescribing, who is dispensing and who is receiving opioids in the province of Ontario. We needed to do that because we knew that there were too many people in this province who were visiting multiple doctors to get prescriptions for opioids, that there were some pharmacies that were dispensing without asking the right questions, that certain patients were getting access to prescription narcotics that were not being used for the intended purposes. That part is fully operational now. In fact, I was very pleased to see an article in Ottawa that the number of pharmacies that are being broken into has been reduced, I think, to zero, of late. So we are making improvements. We are moving forward.

We're looking forward to the drug information system being fully operational, and we're on track to see that in 2013. I do think that you would agree that getting it right is more important than getting it done on time. I will not support moving forward until we are ready to move forward. If we know we can do better, then I'm prepared to take the time to make it right. This is a very important issue.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My closing comment, Minister—then I'm going to turn it over to my colleague—is that surely your ministry must be ashamed of having spent \$2.4 billion with absolutely nothing to show for it at this point in time. Again, I think that we owe an explanation to our—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That is a completely erroneous statement that you just made. We have made tremendous progress. Patients are benefitting every day from the progress that has been made on eHealth Ontario—60% of family physicians, 40% of community-based specialists. We have an emergency neuro-image transfer system. We have filmless hospitals. Tremendous

progress has been made. For you to suggest that money has been spent without any outcomes that are impacting patients, you are completely wrong. You know you are wrong, and you are intentionally making erroneous statements.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No, I wouldn't put words in my mouth like that, Minister; I certainly wouldn't.

Again, I go back to a statistic of April this year—we're talking about the drug information system—65% of community pharmacies were supposed to be submitting dispensing events to DIS. Right now—zero.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It is late. Nobody is arguing that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** April 12 this year—I know your answer will be, "This is late; nobody's arguing that" as well—but 35% of physicians were to be sending ordering events to DIS and, again, currently zero.

I see money is being spent around here, but there's nothing—nobody's using the system. Where's the value in it? You talked about the narcotic grant, but that is not what we're talking about here in this regard.

I'm going to turn it over now to my colleague Mr. Leone.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you for that, Minister, I think that the issues that we're raising here are not necessarily related to some of the progress that you've made, but that all of the progress to date has either been very late or very over budget. We have serious concerns with respect to that.

Since we have Dr. King available with us, I would like to ask some questions related to immunization and such. In your estimation, Minister, is Ontario presently prepared, from a technological and information management perspective, for the next inevitable outbreak of a communicable disease like SARS, avian flu or H1N1?

**Dr. Arlene King:** I can answer it in a number of different questions. There has been a lot of, actually, improvements made in the whole area of health protection over the last number of years. Let me just start with the creation of Public Health Ontario, which provides public health evidence to us in support of program and policy development. It has been a really key achievement. The development of emergency management capability within the ministry, supported through Public Health Ontario, is another really important way to be able to coordinate our overall responses to emergencies. Those are two key elements.

The other area that we're, of course, in the process of doing is implementing Panorama, which I made a recommendation on after H1N1 in my report on how Ontario fared in terms of H1N1. You will recall that I made a recommendation that Panorama, which is an information system to record communicable diseases and immunization, be implemented. The government is proceeding with that recommendation, I'm pleased to be able to say.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm curious, Minister: What's the status of Panorama? Do you have an update?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will ask—



**Dr. Arlene King:** In fact, we just completed a pilot in the Grey Bruce Health Unit that was highly successful. It was a pilot specifically of the immunization module for use in supporting immunizations that are delivered in school-based settings, specifically, HPV—human papillomavirus—vaccine and hepatitis B vaccine. It was resoundingly successful. We, of course, are using the pilots to learn any lessons we need to learn in terms of further system improvements, technological improvements, and to pave the way for further implementation across the province.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It's my understanding that public health units were supposed to have Panorama up and running by April 2010. I'm wondering, has that happened? If not, why not?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Again, I think that we could get back to you on that specific information. That being said, I'm really confident that the path we're on right now in terms of implementing Panorama will enable us to be successful. We have spent some time over the last few months setting ourselves up for success insofar as ensuring readiness of the field and readiness of the centre to be able to support that. We are certainly on track to be able to implement Panorama with a target date of, I believe it's April of 2013, 2014—that kind of time range.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Is that for the immunization/vaccine ordering and delivery capabilities, or is that for the communicable disease and outbreak functions?

**Dr. Arlene King:** The first phase of this is the implementation of the immunization-related components, so the actual ability to record vaccines in Panorama as well as vaccine inventory management, followed by the communicable disease elements of that system.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Dr. King, you had stated previously, and this is a quote that I've received from staff, "We do not have the capacity to track and manage an immunization program. I am absolutely suggesting that on this, we can do better. The technology exists today. It is a pan-Canadian solution called Panorama that has been in development since after SARS.... There must be no more delays. Panorama will allow us to ... respond to outbreaks of disease.... It will give us a 21st-century tool for dealing with pandemics in the 21st century." How close are we to achieving that?

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**Dr. Arlene King:** Again, as I said, we've had a pilot implemented in Grey-Bruce. There is an expansion of the pilot planned over the new few months, and we will continue to roll it out as the system is ready for that and as we apply any lessons learned related to rollout. It's a massive undertaking. The system will be rolled out to 2,000 public health professionals, 36 health units and Public Health Ontario. It is a large undertaking, and we will continue to—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Why haven't the government and public health units had this operational since the deadlines that were previously established: April 2010 for immunization and vaccines; and for the communicable

diseases, several months later than that? Why hasn't it happened?

**Dr. Arlene King:** I should just also contextualize my response with the fact that Panorama is a pan-Canadian solution as well, that was developed through collaboration among provinces and territories and the federal government. We've been working in lockstep with other jurisdictions to ensure that we not only have a solution for Ontario but also for other jurisdictions.

As I'm sure you realize, communicable diseases know no borders. People move a lot, and it's important that we ensure we have a solution that is suitable for all jurisdictions, as well, of course, and importantly, for the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I have a question for the minister. Minister, certainly our caucus is very concerned about the status of the Panorama program—the fact that it has been delayed for a number of years, and we've invested money into it already and so on. You have previously stated that "Ontario must enter into two agreements with Panorama's vendors to obtain the software licence and to establish the support and maintenance terms. Without approval, the Panorama project will end, and Ontario will fail to meet its goal of improving the business of public health and will continue operating aging and increasingly unreliable infrastructure. This will result in the loss of over \$40 million invested to date, a lost opportunity to flatten the health care curve, and possible legal ramifications." This is from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care scheduling report from December 24, 2010, on page 9.

My question, Minister: Did the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care manage to enter into a new agreement with IBM?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm sorry; can you clarify what it is you're reading from?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It's the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care scheduling report. The date is December 24, 2010, and it's on page 9.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I thought you said that I had made that statement, and I was having trouble—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The ministry stated it. I'm sorry if I—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What scheduling report are you referring to?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It's the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care scheduling report from December 24, 2010, on page 9.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're not quite sure what document that is. Do you have the document?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** At the moment, no. But can you comment on the generality of the comment, since it's coming from your ministry, that \$40 million has been invested to date and there's a lost opportunity to flatten the health care curve? That's what's coming from the document itself. Is there a fear that \$40 million invested in Panorama is going to simply be gone because there has been no agreement entered into with IBM to manage the software licence of Panorama itself?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will ask my deputy to speak to that particular issue.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I believe IBM was procured by the BC government. The BC government acted on behalf of provinces and territories for the better part of a couple of years, if not longer, in trying to get an agreement that could be signed by all jurisdictions. In the end, several jurisdictions chose to sign on, Ontario being one of them, and Ontario led some of those negotiations and discussions with BC and encouraged other provinces to join on.

Given that we have—I can't remember exactly which provinces now, but BC, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan as well, I'm told, and now Quebec—that represents a significant portion of the country's population. That represents probably 60% or 70% of the Canadian population.

We do have a licence agreement with IBM, and that is managed individually by each province. Each province chose to have their own licensing agreement, if I'm not mistaken. I don't know exactly about that \$40 million because I can't recall that number, but thus far we have had a very successful implementation, culminating in this pilot rollout that Dr. King has referred to.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It has been nine years since SARS and the cautionary—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Sorry, I can't even let you start. Time is up.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** If I could though, I would like a copy of the report that you are referring to.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. Before we go on, do any other members have questions for Dr. King? I don't want to keep her here unnecessarily. Are there any other questions directed specifically at her? Oh, yes, you do?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** One quick one, and I'll do them right off the bat. How's that?

Dr. King, we've all read the paper. I had asked you to comment on the health effects of windmills in Ontario and you were very nice in doing a report that you made public and certainly made accessible to me, showing that, with the setbacks that Ontario had set, there were no effects of the use of windmills. The federal health government has now decided to do more study, which is never a bad thing, if you ask me. What is Ontario's position now? Is this a file you're monitoring? Where are we at?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Thank you for the question. I think, first and foremost, I just want to say that I stand by the conclusions that I made in my study of 2010. The weight of the evidence does not support any direct health effects associated with wind turbines if they are appropriately placed, and that is with a minimum of a 550-metre setback.

I am aware of Health Canada's study. I'm always open, of course, to looking at more studies. It will be only a contributor, I want to just add, to the overall thinking. There have been more studies that have come out since I issued my report. We will continue to monitor the literature. All I can say at this point in time is that based on the

evidence to date, I do not believe that the weight of the evidence supports any direct health effects associated with wind turbines.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right. So if you have been monitoring the "weight of the evidence," in the language you used, can we be expecting a new report coming from you? Because they seem to be very prolific in writing about this subject. It's hard to keep up with everything that comes. I realize that 2010 is not really dated, except that it is a field where people write a lot about the health effects, and I was wondering if you would consider doing an update report?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Again, thank you for the question. I certainly acknowledge, regardless of whether we're talking about immunization or wind turbines or any other public health matter, that the problem is not getting, it's vetting the information. That is the job of public health officials, to wade through that information. I want to say that the weight of the evidence—and the evidence that we look at most conclusively is what's called peer-reviewed literature, where there's a critique actually done of the literature, as opposed to what I would call the "grey literature," where that has not occurred.

With respect to updating my report, should I believe that there are data that enable or should enable any kind of a revision to the report or any of the conclusions in particular, I would issue a new report. But I want to just reiterate that the weight of the evidence does not support any relationship between direct health impacts and wind turbines appropriately sited.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Has the federal government approached you or other people within public health to participate in the study that they are doing?

**Dr. Arlene King:** The answer is no. I wasn't aware of the fact that Health Canada actually were doing a study until I saw the information myself. I do not have any information. In fact, they are protecting a lot of the information related to the design and locations of where they're doing the study because they want to protect the integrity of the data. So we will find out more about the methodology when the results come out, and we anticipate that would be in 2014.

But I want to just reiterate, this will be just one more study that we will need to look at as we continue to consider this issue.

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**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Thank you. I think that was it. I do have a question about public health that I think the minister will be able to answer. The—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Dr. King, you'll have to stay because I've just been given information that a Liberal member has a question when it's their turn. Okay.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I realize that health units are partly funded by the municipalities, but I would like to know the percentage of provincial funding, by the program area, to each health unit. Is this something I could get—where I would have the 36 health units and find out how much money they get for Healthy Babies and how



much money they get for the different programs that the provincial government funds?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We will undertake to get you that information.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you. If we could have it for 2011-12, or what it is that you intend for 2012-13.

Going into primary care, I have the same question that I asked about health units. Are there intentions of moving the family health teams into the LHINs? And if so, when can we expect this to happen?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** One of the elements of the action plan is to strengthen the role of family health care. If the LHINs' responsibility is to provide the optimum delivery of care in their geographic area, obviously primary care has to be part of that. I think CHCs are already part of the LHINs' responsibility, so we would look ahead. We don't have an implementation plan for this, but we have signalled the intention to bring primary care under the LHINs. I think it's a really important next step. We've come a long way, attaching more Ontarians to primary care providers, but you know that there are still parts of Ontario where it's very difficult to get a family doctor or a nurse practitioner. We know that there are some subpopulations—people with specific language barriers, for example, or people living in poverty—that have more difficulty accessing primary care than others do. As we work to the goal of having everyone attached to a primary care provider, it's important that that work be planned. Currently, a doctor can set up a practice wherever he or she wishes to do that. We want to have more planning under the umbrella of the LHIN.

We also know that one of the big problems in our health care system is that those hand-offs of care, say, from hospital back to community, are not nearly as strong as they should be. For example, when someone leaves the hospital, they may very well need a follow-up with their family care provider. In some cases, that follow-up isn't happening at all or is happening too long after they've left. There's a lot of work that has to be done to bring primary care into the overall health care system. We need the advice from those family health care providers. They see first-hand where the problems are, and they can be part of the solution.

Another area where our primary care doctors are not having the smooth access to care for their patients is when they need to refer to a specialist. Doctors spend too much time—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You're going further and further away from my question.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Sorry. You're asking when they will be brought under the umbrella of the LHIN. This is something we're working on now.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It wouldn't only be for family health teams; it will be for all primary care organizations, as well as solo? Eventually they will all come?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Doctors will continue to be paid by the ministry, but the planning and integration will involve, ultimately, all our primary care providers.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Can I have a breakdown of the non-physician health professionals working in family health teams? You had done this the last time, and it was most useful, where we see—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** By profession?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** By profession, yes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We can probably do that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Actually, I wouldn't mind having the number of physicians also, but I don't want just physicians and non-physicians. I would like them by nurse practitioners and nurses and social workers etc. That would be useful.

I take it that we still keep a list of underserved communities. For some reason, I can't find it. So I'm going to ask you now, do we have a list of underserved communities, and could I have a copy of it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We changed the Underserved Area Program, and when we did that—well, let me find out. We'll check and see.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If we do have a list of underserved communities, I would also be interested in knowing, do we keep track of how many people don't have access to primary care and don't have a family physician? We used to be able to link those two. That information is not where it used to be anymore; we can't find it. How many communities are underserved and how many people don't have access?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** On whether people are looking for a family doctor or not, we have Health Care Connect. So if people do register with Health Care Connect, we've got those numbers. If they don't register, it's more difficult. We do have, I believe, a survey that is done to determine how many people are without family doctors. But with Health Care Connect, those are real numbers because those are real people, and they are available by LHIN.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I know that you've changed the definition of underserved. It used to be that we would know that such-and-such community had 3,000 people and they had no family physician; they were underserved for 15,000 people or 5,000 people. This information used to be available in that format. If it's still available in that format, I would certainly like to know the list of communities that are underserved, and for how many people, as well as the survey you're talking about that gives us the number of people who are unattached.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We'll see what information we can get on that issue now.

I can tell you that one of the reasons that it's important that the LHIN take on that responsibility is that it's very hard, from downtown Toronto, to understand each community. Not every doctor takes on the same number of patients. Some doctors are working part-time. We have retirements. There are a lot of moving parts. So the more we can get that planning to the local level, the better information we'll have.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You'll remember that the auditor did a special piece on family health organizations, and the ministry actually answered his recommendations.

I was just wondering, are we on target, especially the recommendation of recouping some of the cost that had gone?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The answer to that is yes. I believe we've recouped \$121 million. We'll confirm the number. We have a pretty rigorous process, that if money is not spent—because, for example, maybe they haven't been able to fill a position—then we do recoup that money.

Having said that, the Auditor General gave us very good advice, and as always, we are taking that advice very seriously.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sounds good.

I'm going to be talking about nurses for a little while. Whether it's HealthForceOntario or the Nursing Secretariat, do we have any current studies regarding the skill mix and changes in the nursing staff in Ontario's hospitals?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** We know the number of NPs, RNs and RPNs in that mix and how that mix has been tracking in terms of growth. I just don't know it by hospital, in terms of the mix within the hospital—or of hospitals across the province.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If I could have those trends in whichever way you have, it will be a good step—the mixes of nurses within the hospital sector. If you have it by LHINs or you have it by big, small, rural hospitals etc., whatever breakdown you have, I would be interested—and all you have is for all, and I'll take what you have.

Do we have any studies that look at future supply and demand for nurses in Ontario?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes, we can get you that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, I would be glad to see that.

Then, in May this year, we talked about how 900-plus nurses were to be hired. Do we know the numbers out of those 900 that have been hired now?

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**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** The short answer is yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And a number will come—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And we know where they are, in what field: 144 of them are working in our school boards on mental health. I think there are 200 who are part of the behavioural supports initiative to support people, particularly in long-term-care homes, who need special behavioural supports. So we're hiring nurses. There are public health nurses—there are a range of them.

I thought I could put my fingers on it, but let's see if we can get that information for you.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to know, let's say of the 144 in schools, how many of them have actually been hired. Do we know if there are actually bodies in those positions? The same thing with the 200 behavioural nurses. Has the money flowed? Have they been hired? I would be interested in knowing where we are at, and knowing the full breakdown as to where the 900-plus are going to be allocated.

The last one is the 900 new nursing positions that were announced way back. What is the actual number of new nurses that were hired? Do we keep track of those by nursing classification, as in, how many were RNs and how many were RPNs etc.?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, we will endeavour to get you that detailed information.

I think the other category of nurses that I'm pretty excited about are the care coordinators, specifically to ensure that people with complex conditions who are being discharged from hospital get a visit from that care connector within 24 hours of discharge from the hospital to make sure that they are getting the follow-up care that they need.

There are a number of initiatives that are really part of the transformation of the health care system to provide better care at the right time, in the right place. We will undertake to get you those—though I think maybe the deputy has—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, okay.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** One should be careful about reading out something that's thrust in front of you. With that proviso, I'm trying to get a year here, so that's why I'm—pardon me. From 2010-11—these are just family health team nurses.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** But that's the breakdown by specialty that she'd asked for earlier.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes, sorry, it's a different question; you're right. This is by the family health team professionals that you were looking for.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** But 2010-11—I think I already have those.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** It's 2010-11 and 2011-12.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And 2011-12?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Between those two years, as to what was approved, what was hired. We'll get this to you as opposed to me reading it out. I'm sure someone would want me to read it out, but since it was just thrust in front of me, I'm cautious about that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, that would be good. If you could give me 2010-11 and 2011-12. I think you've already shared with me 2010-11, as to how many positions had been funded. I'm not sure I ever knew how many were actually hired.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** About 88% have been hired against those approved.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** In addition to these 3,000 approved, 2,600 hired, there are 2,400 physicians who are also working with an enrolment of approximately 2.8 million patients across those family health teams.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** But I will get more details as to social workers, dietitians and all the rest?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** You will, but offhand, there are 339 mental health/social workers. RPNs are, of course, far fewer than RNs and NPs. But the highest hiring rates would be in social workers, dietitians and all nursing, verging on 88% to 90% hired against approved.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.



**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You have 45 seconds left.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Forty-five seconds? Oh, all right. I wanted to go into home care, but I'll just put out one question and—

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I could answer your CINOT question, if you'd like.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, can you? Well, why don't you do that?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** It's not how the manual goes, but CINOT allocation in 2011-12 was \$3.9 million—spent, excuse me, in 2011-12, was \$2.8 million; allocation in 2012-13 is \$3.9 million. Healthy Smiles allocation in 2010 was \$29.5 million—sorry; I may have the numbers reversed. I think allocation should be \$27.9 million. No, no, pardon me: allocation, \$29.5 million; spent, \$27.9 million. In 2011-12: allocation, \$30 million; spent, \$25.8 million. The 2012-13 budgeted allocation is \$30 million.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay, I'm going to have to stop you there. It is now the turn of the government. I understand Mr. Craitor has the first question.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Dr. King, I had a question of yourself, so thank you for staying a little longer. I did not expect you to be here, and I'm really pleased that you are. I didn't expect the subject of wind power to come up, and I'm really glad that it has, because you are here.

Just a couple short things: As you know, we're inundated as politicians—against it, for it, all those type of things. There are people who passionately believe that it has huge health care problems, and there are others who tell us studies galore have shown the opposite. I know there are people back home who are watching this in my riding because wind power has become very prolific; a number of industries have opened up.

I want to ask you this, just to have it on the record, and I want to be able to comment when I go back to my riding that I had a chance to speak to you in person. You produced a study; it's independent of the government. It's not something where we gave you the data—when I say “the government,” I mean our party—and said, “Here's what we're giving to you. We want you to review what we're giving to you. We want you to produce a report for that.” Yours was done completely independent of any of the parties. Am I correct?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Yes.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** When you do a study like that—whether it's on a drug or some type of new service that's coming in—can you just quickly tell me: How do you put it together so you can analyze it? Because you could have come up with the opposite point of view if you had had data that would have showed that. Do you mind taking a moment and just kind of explaining for the public how that works?

**Dr. Arlene King:** I'll tell you specifically how and why I did the study. First of all, there were a lot of concerns being expressed by the population about alleged health concerns related to wind turbines in the province of Ontario. I also was concerned about the fact that there

was a lot of misinformation out there as well. That's why I convened a group of people together: a group of medical officers of health out there in the province who had an interest in this topic, expertise from Public Health Ontario and expertise within the ministry, to compile all of the literature on this topic—the literature was from about 1970 to the present time—to look at all of the literature that existed, both peer-reviewed and what I talked about before, which was grey literature. They reviewed all of it for its strength, and came up with a conclusion which is not at odds with the conclusion of most other reputable health organizations, like the World Health Organization, as an example. The institute of public health in Quebec has recently done a review as well and concluded that the weight of the evidence did not support any link between direct health outcomes and wind turbines. So that's generally how it was done.

It was done over quite a number of months—I can't remember exactly how many months we pulled the literature together—and then issued the report. The reasons were as I outlined: concerns being expressed by the public about wind turbines and the health impacts. Also, I felt that there was a great deal of misinformation that existed out there.

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If I can make one other point too, which I think is quite an important one, it's that coal-burning produces a lot of air pollutants, and we know that the air pollutants produced as a result of burning combustible fuels like that do definitively result in adverse health impacts. Wind, on the other hand, is a clean, renewable source of energy, and it doesn't produce any pollutants, as well.

Again, it would be expected that promotion of greener energy alternatives over time would in fact reduce the incidence of adverse health effects as well. It's always important to put that in context in terms of what our alternatives are, related to something like a clean energy like wind.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Thank you. I'll just check one last time: Are there any other questions of Dr. King? You will have some?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Then you'll have to stay. You've touched on a lot of things here, obviously.

Back to the government.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Chair, could we juggle the time to let the person leave, and just take it off our time and have the questions asked, with the agreement of the other members here?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You want to allow your time to be used by other members?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I think within limits, but I think it's important that the medical officer of health leaves; it's the urgent nature of her business. If we could do that, it would be very helpful.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Is there consent of the members to do that, to use Liberal time? Okay.

I'll first turn to the Liberals. Are there any other questions of Dr. King?

Seeing none, we'll turn to the Conservatives. Are there questions of Dr. King?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, Doctor, it's nice to have you here today too. It was a pleasant surprise.

Since the mention of turbines has in fact come up, obviously, from a health perspective point of view, turbines in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex—it's huge. Probably by the end of 2013, if not 2014, there will be over 500 turbines in a relatively small, compacted area.

Of course, as we know right now, the government has chosen to maintain control as to not allowing municipalities to decide whether or not turbines are to be built. As a result, though, recognizing that turbines are a relatively new form of renewable energy, sometimes it takes years—months, if not years—to determine or ascertain whether or not there are health effects caused by, in this case, wind turbines.

It's a very sensitive, highly emotional but also factual concern back in my riding. People are suffering from sleep deprivation, ringing, buzzing in the ears—children are saying, "Mommy, when are the bees going to stop buzzing in my ear?"—dizziness, vertigo and other associated illnesses. Recognizing that maybe—I believe you called it grey paper—

**Dr. Arlene King:** Grey literature, yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Grey literature, yes. I respect that; I do. However, one of the things I found, based on having been in business for a number of years as well—not in health but in business—is that sometimes I've had to change my direction, based on new information. I appreciate a comment that you'd made earlier, that you stand by your statement of 2010—that's two years ago now. At that time, turbines were relatively new in areas. Perhaps data may be changing.

I do have information—unfortunately, I wasn't aware that you were going to be here today. I can get you the information from the World Health Organization, which has done complete studies as well—I'm sure you've looked at those studies—in terms of what their findings are. We are finding that, in fact, turbines are creating more and more.

Now, to the minister's point, you talk about increasing health care. Turbines may be, in fact, compounding a problem in the health care field, based on the effects of wind turbines, so it may be adding to your costs down the road. I don't have hard data for that, Minister, and I'm not asking to provide it. I'm just, as they say, throwing it to the wind right now—no pun intended. Yes, it was intended. I just fairly want to mention that to you.

Again, to Dr. King, you've mentioned that there are other studies. We now know that Health Canada has jumped in. To me, when suddenly Health Canada jumps in, it's implying anyway that they're beginning to listen more and more, as I'm sure you are, to the new health concerns that are coming up relative to wind turbines in areas throughout Ontario and, of course, with Health Canada, throughout our great country.

Again, I would just ask, Doctor, that perhaps closer consideration be given to the findings and listening to the people. We've had town hall meetings down in our area, as in other rural areas. It isn't happening in the larger cities, for obvious reasons. Again, we have to listen to rural Ontario, because in fact what we don't want to do is become a burden to the health care system in the event down the road that it is identified, and I don't know—did your study identify the effects of low-frequency vibration?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Let me sort of step back and give you a little bit broader answer to some of your questions.

First of all, the decisions with respect to renewable energy policies are made by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Energy. My job is to look at whether or not, if I feel there is a need to do so—to determine whether there are health impacts associated with some of those policies, which is what I did.

Now, the literature on wind turbines does date back, and we looked back to the 1970s, so there's particularly a fairly extensive amount of literature in Europe related to this issue. A lot of the literature came from Europe, but it also came from whatever was available in North America as well.

When it comes to reaching conclusions—and I talk about the weight of the evidence. It's not just "a" study. Often, what the media does is popularize a study of the day. We look at the whole suite of literature that's available and look at—when I say "the weight of the evidence," there's a number of different criteria that we use to actually evaluate that evidence. They're called the criteria of causation, actually, which enable us to look at things like coherence with other information that we have, what the strength of the association might be. Did the putative health impacts that are in question precede or follow the exposure? Is there a dose/response relationship, meaning that if you get more of that, are you worse off than if you get less—those kinds of considerations. That's the way we in fact evaluate the literature, and that's how we looked at the literature related to wind turbines.

I will acknowledge that there are some people who have been annoyed—and I stated this in my report—by the presence of wind turbines, and annoyance can result in some symptoms that you're describing. Now, I'm not saying that for the individuals who are experiencing those symptoms, their symptoms are caused by annoyance, but we have to recognize that annoyance in fact can lead to symptoms like sleep disturbance and some of the other symptoms that—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So, in fact, some people are more susceptible to, say, wind turbine disturbance than others, based on just their own hearing and sensitivities and so on?

**Dr. Arlene King:** Again, there isn't any evidence that the low-frequency sounds that you're talking about—and those are the ones, I think, that are of particular concern; the sounds themselves—that there's any adverse health impacts associated with the low frequency. We actually



did look at that concern related to what are called low-frequency sounds as well. Yes, people are more susceptible at times, I think, to annoyance.

I just want to cite one other piece of literature, though, that we did look at. Wind turbines have been around, as I mentioned before, for a long time in a number of places, particularly parts of Europe. Studies in Sweden and the Netherlands found that wind turbine sound is annoying to some people, particularly people with a negative attitude to the visual impact of wind turbines. Also, importantly and conversely, the direct economic benefit from wind turbines was associated with decreased annoyance as well. So there are factors that influence whether or not people are annoyed by wind turbines.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. So the economic thing you mentioned was maybe relative to “no-cheque-itis,” which is “no cheque.” They’re not receiving economic benefit.

The other part, though, is psychosomatic. You’re suggesting that it may be kind of like in their heads, so to speak. They get annoyed; they have a bad attitude. They get annoyed; it creates stress, high blood pressure and those types of things. All right—

**Dr. Arlene King:** Again, I don’t want to imply, though—it’s always important. As Chief Medical Officer of Health, of course I take people’s health concerns seriously, and I don’t want to imply that people don’t have some of these symptoms. I’m suggesting that some of those symptoms can be related to annoyance. I think if people have persistent symptoms that they not just attribute them to annoyance, however, that they actually go and get assessed, as well, by their medical practitioner to make sure that they don’t have any kind of other health condition as well.

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**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Sure. Listen, I want to thank the Liberals for allowing us to ask a question of our medical officer. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay, and I see that the NDP now has a question.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mine is very short and has nothing to do with windmills. It has to do with your 2010 annual report. In your 2010 report, you talked about health impact assessments and health in all policies as a way to do health promotion and chronic disease management. I was wondering if you have noticed any pickup or any improvement using health in all policies or using health impact assessments.

**Dr. Arlene King:** This is a really important question that you’re asking. In fact, the government has worked on developing a health impact assessment tool. They worked with public health units as well to develop that health impact assessment tool, and we are encouraging both the health sector as well as the non-health sector and public health—that’s three sort of discrete bits—to actually use these health impact assessments in the course of their work. So there is definitely more uptake on that. I think that the question is: How do you best do that? How do you best do those health impact assessments? Juris-

dictions have chosen a number of different ways of doing that.

With respect to all of government activity, absolutely. I think more and more people are thinking across ministries and the various parts of government that need to be addressed to engage in a health issue. That is happening more and more, and I’m really heartened by that. I spend a lot of time, in the course of my work, talking to other ministries because, as I said in my report, the non-health sector has a huge impact on the health of the population, and we need to acknowledge that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So those health impact assessment tools, are they accessible online? How would a group know about them?

**Dr. Arlene King:** I believe that our health impact assessment tool, actually, is available online, but we’ll have to get back to you in terms of the status of the health impact assessment tool work that has been done. I’m just not 100% sure, but I believe that it is publicly available, the work that has been done.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sounds good. Those were my questions. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Any questions arising from that from the Liberals? Okay, seeing none, thank you very much, Dr. King.

The Liberals have four minutes left.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Chair, could we get a little bit more than that?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, you gave it up voluntarily.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** For a good cause.

Back to you, Minister: I have some questions on eHealth. What is the extent of telemedicine use in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said earlier, telemedicine is a very important innovation in Ontario. I believe there were—how many, last year—144,000 consults. I believe there are 200 different specialties that can be accessed through the Ontario Telemedicine Network. It is showing to provide excellent care for people closer to home. This is an innovation that I think Ontarians should be very proud of, and is improving access.

We tend to think of it as something that’s used in remote parts of Ontario, but it’s actually used throughout Ontario, and I just think that we’ve got a lot of potential to do even more remotely. We find that patients, actually, are very satisfied with the care that they are receiving that way.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** What are filmless digital scans? What do they mean for the health care of Ontarians?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What that means is that if you have an X-ray or an ultrasound or a CT scan or an MRI in a hospital, that information is now collected electronically.

I think you and I will remember when, if you went in and had an X-ray on your leg, you’d actually carry the film with you.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I still have mine from 2003.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You have the film? Well hold on to it; it'll be worth something some day.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I had a knee replacement—but that's good.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's no longer done on film anymore. It is making a terrific difference, because what would happen now is that you would have that information. That information on you, on your knee, would be captured electronically. When you went to see your specialist, they would be able to access not just the X-ray you just had done but the one you had two years ago and two years before that. With the click of a mouse, they can see how you're doing over time.

It has reduced the need for duplicate tests, because that information is available electronically. Not only is it collected within the hospital, but it is collected in many parts of Ontario and will be all parts of Ontario at a regional level. In southwestern Ontario, I think 34 hospitals are all hooked up to SWODIN, Southwestern Ontario Digital Imaging Network. These images are held in a central repository and anybody can access them.

It allows someone to go into a smaller hospital without all the expertise of a large academic health science centre, and that image can be interpreted by someone who might have a higher degree of experience and skill in a particular speciality.

This is a remarkable transformation. When we think about where our health care system is going, we will be able to achieve the success we need to achieve if we capitalize on the changes in technology that are available in health care. This is a really good example of an eHealth success that is providing higher-quality patient care, reducing unnecessary testing and saving money.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to have to stop you there. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And on to the Conservatives.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Mr. McNeely. You've raised another important issue with regard to eHealth, and that will be the continuation of our questioning.

Minister, this morning, you referenced, on page 7, keeping Ontarians healthy. You brought up the diabetes segment. My questioning will relate to the diabetes registry of eHealth. That, in fact, was actually an initiative that was announced to much fanfare by the former health minister, David Caplan, who, unfortunately, was a victim, or was a minister who was fired for his handling of eHealth. I'll just remind the committee of that.

Could you tell the committee the original target date for implementation of the diabetes registry?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think you know that Infrastructure Ontario is responsible, working with eHealth Ontario, for the procurement.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I do realize that, Minister, but you direct Infrastructure Ontario. You should know the target date for implementation of that registry. What was that target date?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think you're getting to the point where you're going to say that this project is late—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We'll get there, but I'd like to know what the target date is first.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —and you are absolutely right. I am enormously disappointed that the vendor was unable to deliver this product on time.

This is an AFP procurement. I can tell you that this project is being managed as well as it can be, given that the vendor has not upheld their end of the bargain. But what I can tell you is that an element of the contract with the vendor is that we do not spend one penny until we receive the product, so we have not spent any money on the diabetes registry and will not until that project is delivered exactly to specification.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Just for the committee's knowledge, because you weren't able to answer it, the target implementation date was actually April 2009. When was the vendor selected for that registry?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think what I want to do is just clarify that there have been significant changes at eHealth Ontario: a new chair, a new CEO, a new board. When they came into the positions of responsibility that they have now, they took a very hard look at the projects they had under way. They were responding to the Auditor General's recommendations. As a result, they made some changes as to what projects they would be focusing on. They reduced the number of projects that they were working on, and are phasing them in.

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Under the new leadership, in response to the Auditor General's recommendations, there was a new strategic plan developed that lays out sequencing for these initiatives, all building towards the goal of all Ontarians with an EMR by 2015. But they are doing it in a way that is planned and responsible.

There have been changes, and that is public information that they are moving forward, as well they should be, in a very deliberate way.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Agreed. The original target date, again, was April 2009. I had asked you when the vendor for the registry was actually selected. That wasn't until August 2010, so that's a significant duration afterwards.

I'm not sure if you've had an opportunity to read a Sun column by Jonathan Jenkins, where he talked about—the headline was “eHealth Needs Surgery.” In there, he goes on to talk about many of the deadlines that were missed regarding this important diabetes registry. In fact, there were five implementation deadlines. Can you explain how we've missed five deadlines?

A part of the agreement with the company—is it CGI that is the selected company that's working on this?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I believe so.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** In that agreement, there were to be reports issued to eHealth as to why there was a delay. As per that agreement, you've likely received five reports indicating the reasons for the delays. Will you table those



reports to this committee as to why those delays occurred?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me turn to the deputy; I'm not sure what it is.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Again, I would just say, similar to other requests, if that's what the committee would like to have—I'm not familiar with that exact number, but if that's what the committee is requesting, we will do our best to comply.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We'd like it, obviously, in a timely fashion. Would you say in a week's time, a week from today, we'll be able to get those reports? Would that be sufficient time?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** We have 30 days after the conclusion to supply questions, so I just want to use a certain—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thirty days is fine.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I'm up to 26 different requests for information, which are fairly extensive, so I'm just—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, you've got a big ministry. I'm sure you'll have staff to support that request of the committee.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** And many things to do, as well.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You were saying how it was a colossal failure, basically, to get this off the ground—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Excuse me.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'll say it's a colossal failure, then, to get this off the ground.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Why is CGI still the company that's involved in this if, from your earlier statements, the company was responsible for the delay? Obviously, there were delays from the ministry and eHealth to get this off the ground. Why is CGI still working on this file, then? Do you have faith, still, in CGI to execute the diabetes registry in Ontario?

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, I will.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** It's my understanding that eHealth Ontario and CGI feel that they are still able to produce the first phase of the diabetes registry, which is a limited production release and—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** When do you figure that will be? What's the deadline or target for that?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I don't have that at my fingertips, but it will be part of the response that we will provide.

They are confident that CGI has the ability to provide the product, but also, CGI is contracted to do so under a partnership model that, as the minister mentioned, means that payment comes on substantial completion. Substantial completion is a production release that is acceptable to eHealth Ontario, as is my understanding. They believe that they can deliver that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Are you aware that CGI, actually, was the same company employed to execute the federal gun registry that, again, was also a colossal failure?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** No, I didn't know that—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, they are. They were.

What percentage of diabetes patients are currently registered under this registry?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** The production release has not come out yet so we aren't actually registering those patients. We'll register those patients once the registry has been built. We've been using data that's available to eHealth Ontario to test drive, if you will, the software solution that has been designed thus far.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** To your understanding, what was the most recent date for the registry's full deployment?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I don't have that at my fingertips. I'll have to get—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay. That's obviously an important—we want to be able to measure. I think Ontarians have spent an awful lot of money.

I will go back, just quoting a reference, to correct the record. Smart Systems for Health agency began actually operating in 2003, which turned into eHealth in 2008. You referenced the Auditor General's \$800 million that was issued to Smart Systems for Health. I'd like to state for the record, in fact, that it was your government that operated Smart Systems for Health agency five out of the five and a half years of its operation. Just for the record, I want to state that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I was just quoting the Auditor General.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** And I'm simply quoting the fact that your government operated Smart Systems for Health five out of the five and a half years.

I'd like you to get back to me on that full deployment date in terms of the last deployment. I believe it was January 2011, and it's July 2012, so we're very much off course. I know there were a lot of changes at eHealth. I believe the new chair came in at the tail end of 2010 and—you know what?—now we're at 2012 and diabetic patients in Ontario still have no registry.

I'd like you to comment, Minister, on the following statement. You spoke this morning of your work with the Canadian Medical Association or the Ontario Medical Association, but I want to reference a Canadian Medical Association Journal in June of this year: "But critics say the overdue registry has been beset by procurement mis-cues, surpassed by technological change and may already be worthy of being ditched as yet another example of a centralized approach to eHealth run amok and having little clinical merit."

That was the Canadian Medical Association Journal, June 2012. What do you have to say to that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I presume you're referring to an article published in that journal.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I am.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Who was the author of that?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Canadian Medical Association Journal 2012—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, no, they were not the author of the article.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I don't have that information but I'm sure it's available.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** If you could get that—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You've got staff. You can ask—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Excuse me, if you quote from a document in committee, you are obliged then to provide that document. Please do that.

What I can tell you is that our diabetes strategy is rolling out.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** When is your deadline for that strategy rollout, then?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** There are different components to the diabetes strategy. The regional coordination centres are up and running. They are providing very intense wraparound service for people with diabetes. I know that Mr. Dhillon is here from Brampton. There's one at William Osler that is receiving excellent reports from patients who are benefitting from that care. The Centre for Complex Diabetes Care—that's at William Osler. The regional coordination centres are bringing in a range of supports for people with diabetes because, as you know, people with diabetes have different health care needs.

Finally, they are being coordinated, and we are supporting people to manage their own disease to slow down the progression of diabetes and maybe even halt the progression of their diabetes with appropriate management. We've got diabetes education programs, diabetes education teams. Diabetes is a disease that we can manage much, much better than we currently are, so we're making progress.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But Minister, we can't manage this—a big part of this is the diabetes registry. I mean, how can we manage something—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That is one component of it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You know what? Year after year after year, eHealth and your ministry continue to let Ontarians down in getting this together. We've missed target dates and implementation dates big time. The goal of the registry is to track indicators such as blood sugar and cholesterol levels, kidney function and eye exams for an estimated 1.1 million Ontarians with the disease and then link that information to all the health care providers who work with the individual patient. I mean, 1.1 million Ontarians who have diabetes are in desperate need of this registry to not only help them but, obviously, to provide efficiencies in the overall system.

I'll read you another quote by—

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Mr. Chair, if we're going to be reading documents, the minister has to see them before the questions are asked.

1220

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm just referencing—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** If she wishes them.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm reading—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And she does.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'll read a statement, Darren Larsen, who you also suggested work with—he's a senior

peer leader at OntarioMD, which is overseeing the installation of a \$236-million electronic medical records system for 11,000 physicians: "The diabetes registry will never be used unless it is compatible with physician EMRs.... 'Anything they build that is outside the EMR will not be used much.' But until four months ago, the registry team 'had never seen an EMR. That surprises me.'" What do you say to that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would very much appreciate seeing the document you're reading from and—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It was a quote that he'd said for—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that your suggestion that people with diabetes cannot have their condition managed by their primary care providers—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I didn't—no, now you're putting words; I did not say that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, what you said was that the 1.1 million Ontarians with diabetes are not getting appropriate care.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** No, I didn't say that. Minister, I did not say that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, we could look at Hansard.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Point of order.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I am telling you—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We have a point of order here. Mr. McNeely?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Mr. Chair, I think it is the custom that those documents are produced before the questions are asked from them. I think we need those documents. It doesn't take long to reproduce them. We should all have the benefit of them as this progresses.

**Interjection:** We should all get a copy.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Some of this is just a quotation. I would ask the member, Mr. Harris, over the lunch period, if he has some documentation, to bring it forward for your next round of questioning and to make sure that the minister has an opportunity to review them, if you have those documents. If you don't, then I would think the question is moot, because the minister is not obliged to answer something that she doesn't have.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm simply asking her to comment on a statement that I have just read, and I'd like to hear her answer on that.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I think it's important, Mr. Chair, to see the context of the quotation.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** The minister is the one who has to—your point is well made, but it is the minister who has to invoke that, if she wants to see it. If she simply says, "I can't answer it, because I don't have the document," that's an answer in and of itself.

Mr. Dhillon, on the same point.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Chair, it's also relevant for us, as we may want to comment on what the entire gist of the story or the document is. It's not just for the minister.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We'll go to the library. There's a magazine in there which has this quote, so we'll photo-



copy it and get it to you, if you want to read it. But my questioning is directed to the minister. So we'll move beyond that, I guess.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** All right. Over the lunch hour, if Mr. Harris is able to find it, he will make copies and we will have it distributed to the members. If he can't find it—

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** And then perhaps he can ask his questions after we have the documents.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So, Minister, I'm not suggesting that those patients are not getting the proper care. In fact, I just simply stated that this diabetes registry that your former colleague—one who in fact was fired for this colossal failure of eHealth—bragged about, and yet, years and years later, we still don't have—tell me what percentage of diabetic patients in Ontario have had their profiles uploaded to this registry. Can you answer that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I sure can, because the registry is not operational.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So, none.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Of course.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So, nobody in Ontario.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I believe the deputy already answered that. We have collected baseline data from our primary health care providers on their patients with diabetes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Again, a deadline of implementation in 2009; the vendor wasn't selected until 2010. The last deadline it was to be rolled out was January 2011; it is now July 2012. Ontarians want to know how much more money they're going to have to sink into this. Although you say CGI hasn't been paid a dime, I can assure you that Ontarians have paid through eHealth time and time again for the development of such a registry. How long are you going to tell folks with diabetes that they're going to have to wait for this registry that will really help them? How much longer? Tell me that today. When are we going to see this?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm a bit confused by your line of questioning. You just told me that it's not going to be helpful for people with diabetes, and then you're saying people with diabetes are waiting for the—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It is helpful, Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm just confused by the argument that you're making.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, this registry will be extremely helpful, but it's not rolled out yet. When is it coming? Tell Ontarians who have diabetes today when the rollout will happen. What is the date?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that Infrastructure Ontario and eHealth Ontario are very focused on this diabetes registry becoming operational.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But why isn't your Ministry of Health focused on this?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, I can tell you that we are. It is the responsibility of eHealth Ontario and Infrastructure Ontario to deliver the contract. I am very, very

disappointed that we do not have this registry up and running right now.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, who's responsible? Ultimately, you're responsible for this, though, Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I can tell you that your suggestions that money has been wasted are false. No money will be spent on this project until we have a substantially completed product.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So you're telling me that no taxpayer dollars have been spent, to date, on anything to do with the diabetes registry at all?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That is correct.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So you're saying there haven't been funds allocated through eHealth for the implementation of this diabetes registry at all?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The contract with CGI is clear: They get paid when and if they deliver the product. There will be no money flowing to CGI until they have met their contractual obligations.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Right, but I'm assuming and I'm confident that money has been spent through the bureaucracy, through eHealth, through the ministry, to develop the specification—all kinds of things—and Ontarians still don't have this much-needed registry that will help folks with diabetes.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that, I have to cut you off. The 20 minutes is up.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We're going to break now for lunch. You're going to get an extra three minutes because of the timing here. Please be back at 1 o'clock. Lunch is available for members of the committee and staff in committee room 1. We stand recessed until 1 o'clock.

*The committee recessed from 1227 to 1305.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I call the meeting back to order. The time rotation is now going to the NDP. Ms. Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would now like to ask a few questions about home care. The first one has to do with competitive bidding and the rumours from the field that the association of CCACs is working on a new policy for new, flexible contracts starting this fall. First, where are we with competitive bidding, and is the way we award contracts going to change, stay the same etc.?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think we all agree that home care is a part of our health care system where we really do need to focus significant attention. We are working very hard to drive improved quality in all parts of our health care system, and that includes home care. As you can appreciate, when people are receiving home care they are unsupervised. Some of the checks and balances in other settings are not there in home care. So driving quality, how do we improve quality? How do we measure quality? Our focus very much has been on ensuring that home care that is provided is the highest possible quality of care.

We put a moratorium on competitive bidding because we wanted to get the quality piece right before we went

out to competitive bidding, because quality is every bit as important if not more important than price. In fact, without high quality, we don't care what the price is. So that work is under way.

The Ontario Association of CCACs is developing a sector-led strategy because the existing contracts do roll over this fall. What are we going to do as those contracts wind up to ensure continued care? The Ontario Association of CCACs is working with their partners in that sector to give us that advice so that we can ensure continuity of care in the home care sector and the highest possible quality of care.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And when will a decision be made as to what kind of competitive bidding system we use going forward?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We are not in a position to give you an answer to that. There has been no decision made about lifting that moratorium. As I say, until I can be assured that we know how to measure quality and we have a way to ensure that home care is being delivered at the highest possible quality, I'm not interested in moving forward on competitive bidding.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Then can we have an update as to the number of contracts that CCACs have? I would like it broken down as to the number of contracts for-profit and not-for-profit, the pure numbers, and then the percentage of dollar amounts. So let's say there's 100 contracts to the for-profit and 200 to the not-for-profit, but money-wise, it's not necessarily 30%-60%—so an idea as to how many there are in these categories and how much money they represent.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So you want a sense of the mix of for-profit and not-for-profit in the home care sector.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In the home care sector, correct.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let's see what we can get you on that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, thank you.

Does the province know about the different wait-lists for the 14 CCACs and for different home care services that they provide?

1310

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The LHINs, obviously, pay very close attention to that. The CCACs are accountable to the LHINs. I think what you're asking about is the variation from one LHIN to another LHIN in terms of the care that's provided.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** As well as the totals. I wouldn't mind knowing how many people are on a wait-list for home care, let's say personal services or home care for having whatever amount of service. I would certainly like it broken down as much as possible, but also knowing it province-wide—that would be a telling number.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We'll get you that information, if we can. I'm not sure what's available and in what format, but we'll dig into that one.

But just as we're changing how we fund hospitals to an activity-based, person-centred funding model, we are going to be doing the same in home care. What we will

see going forward, as we implement this, is that CCACs will be funded on the basis of how much care they provide. I think this is an important rebalancing again so that we have common, or as close to common as we can, services provided by CCACs across the province.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right. In that line of thought, then, I would like to know—different CCACs seem to have different maximum hours of care. I don't know why but it seems to be that way. I would be interested in knowing, what are the maximums that exist? What percentage of their clients actually do get the maximum? And what are the average hours of care that their clients get, and what percentage of their clients receive the average? Is this something that you guys know?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Well, I'm not sure that they track it based on averages, although that's a computation, of course. The unique nature of the client would be a determination made by that case manager. It's really, I think, going to be difficult to foresee a set-up that says, LHIN by LHIN, the average amount of service provided.

We could provide that computation. I worry about what it tells us and what it might mask or not inform as to what's the grid or the spectrum of services needed and would that variation lead to some positive or false conclusions, by LHIN.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The other part that I think is important in this conversation is that we are moving forward with implementation of programs like Home First, where people get very extensive and intensive home care supports when they leave hospital. In fact, there are no service maximums. Some people receive 24-7 care as they transition out of hospital and to home. As we look to home care to help us get people out of hospital sooner and keep them out of long-term care, we might see some distortions in those averages, because some LHINs are moving forward more aggressively on Home First.

We'll get you the information that we can, but I would be very careful about interpreting any of those results, because home care—and this is a very good thing—is really changing how it delivers care. It is being taken much more seriously now, I would say, than it has been in the past. It is a very important part of our health care system and we have very high expectations of people providing care in the home.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** If I could just add, some of the recent initiatives will also provide that immediate support within 72 hours. Now, whether that gets counted as a home care service—if it's a rapid-response nurse, for example—is arguable because some LHINs may treat that differently and may log it differently. That's why I'm just concerned that the data may belie certain actions that are actually taking place—because your home care needs could diminish as a result.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I think you're going into the direction that I wanted you to go anyway. That shows that of the 14 CCACs, they have different series of programs for different people, for different occasions, and all



of those are different from one CCAC to the next. The example that the minister just gave: that if you get discharged and need 24-hour care, you would get this in some of the CCACs; in others, even if you do need 24-hour care, the maximum they will ever give you is 12.

What I'm getting at is pretty much in line with the answer you've just given me, that it varies so much from one CCAC to the next, from one combination—a client coming out of a hospital in London with the exact same needs as a client coming out of the hospital in Sudbury could end up with completely different access to home care because they happen to be in one CCAC rather than the next, because one CCAC has these sorts of rules and these sorts of limits.

What I'm interested in is, do you guys keep track as to what are the different programs with the maximum hours of care from the 14 different LHINs? Because they vary just as much as you've explained to me right now.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I would say in addition, though, that the core programs would be the same; how they're interpreted and applied to patients and clients will vary for sure.

There may be caregiver support with that client in London versus in North Bay etc. You know better than I do that those things have a demonstrable impact on what the case manager feels is the level of service to individual need.

As we said earlier, we will try to get those service maximums and, perhaps, averages by LHINs for home care, if we have them—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Or even by “service.” If you're part of Home First, here's your service maximum, here's your average. If you are known as chronic home care—you have been on home care for a long time—what are the maximums that you can have in your CCAC and what is the average that people in that category get? There are six, seven, sometimes eight different categories of maximums you can get, and those vary from CCAC to CCAC. The fact that you have five, six, seven or eight different categories also varies from CCAC to CCAC. I'd like to have a global picture of that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Part of the job description of Dr. Sinha, who's heading up our seniors care strategy, is to look at home care. I have one colleague who is blessed by having four different LHINs in her riding, four different CCACs, so she sees first-hand—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You use “blessing” generously.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Exactly, yes. She certainly has explained to me how there are different policies in different CCACs. I do believe that decision-making closest to the ground can be the best, but you need a constant province-wide standard as well. Trying to find that balance—we're moving more in that direction as we move to activity-based funding, for example.

We are absolutely determined to provide supports for people so they get care in the right place—home, whenever possible. That will mean more enhanced home care for some. This is very much a work in progress right now.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Even if you date it, as of that date, I would be happy with having that kind of information.

My last question on home care is, what is the total home care operating fund coming from the province for home care? I was wondering if you could quote the last three fiscal years, just so that we can. If there was growth in funding, which we all know there was, if you could identify them also, as in number of dollars.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Funding for CCACs in 2003-04?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Not for CCACs, for home care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** For home care alone?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Would you be interested in CCACs? Because the bulk of that is home care, right?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I already have the CCAC numbers. They're easy to come by. It's the home care dollars of this that I'm interested in.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Okay. Let's see what we can get for you on that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sounds good.

I have a few odds and ends. How many minutes, Mr. Chair?

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Fifteen? Oh, thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, no, about six or seven.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. I just thought I would throw that out there.

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Just checking, yes.

You made an announcement for birth centres. I just wanted to know what is the process, how far along, and when can we see a next step?

1320

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We put out a call for midwife practice groups to come forward with proposals on stand-alone birth centres in their communities.

Are those tenders still open, that call for proposals?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Yes, I'm familiar with the call for proposals. I'm trying to recall if it's closed and staff are reviewing. The procurement process will be a two- to three-month process at the very least, and then we'll move to undertake a review for the two centres. There's quite a detailed set of criteria for midwives and birth centre candidates to meet.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right. So if you give me an expandable timeline—the procurement process, another three months, let's say, and then what are we looking at before you have made a selection and start working with that particular practice to put a birth centre in place?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** The selection shouldn't take more than a few weeks. Then it will be a function of how fast those centres can get incorporated. They may have partners with them, all not-for-profit models.

So it's really hard to say, but if our family health team and NPLC experience is an indicator, it may mean, let's say, if the RFP closed next September, a month—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The RFP does close in September, I've been notified.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I was just going from memory. Thank you.

So it could easily be early into 2013-14 when there's a physical location. But that's a pretty gross timeline.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I understand. But by September, the RFP procurement process would have been concluded. You give yourself a month to make a decision, and then you would start working with a particular midwife practice, or a few.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes. I can't recall if the RFP calls for the proponents to have a location or whether we then have to work with them for them to get a location. As we can all imagine, sometimes that can take several months. I just don't recall all the criteria in the RFP.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** As those become clearer, I certainly would like some information on this as to how the process is—if you have some specific dates that are public information, if you could share that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that there are many midwife practice groups that are very excited about the potential, and you probably have heard that as well.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, I have.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The next one has to do with smoke-free Ontario and just to see if the government has any interest in closing up the loophole about flavoured tobacco—Ontario did pass a bill and there was a loophole that was left behind—and if there's any interest in moving in that direction.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to thank you for bringing that issue forward, and it is one that we are giving serious consideration to.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, good. And do we have—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You have good ideas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Do we have any idea as to when those good ideas could be acted upon?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No. All right. Well, you can't blame me for trying.

Same with talking about health promotion: We don't have a Ministry of Health Promotion anymore. It has been transferred. How can I know that all of the programs that were under the Ministry of Health Promotion are still there and existing? Do they still have funding? Has the funding changed? How do we follow those?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just to be clear, the sport part of health promotion and sport did not come to the Ministry of Health. It went elsewhere. But, yes, the programs remain. Maybe you could speak to—

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** They do, and the funding has remained intact from the previous fiscal year. In fact, that funding is already, of course, flowing to transfer payment partners.

There are a couple of ways of tracking that. One would be through public accounts—the published. In 2012-13, I believe, in our printed estimates—

**Interjection:** Vote 1414.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** —we have a vote and item in the printed estimates that shows the health promotion spending allocation.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, so vote 1414, I could see the aggregate, but you're telling me that whatever amounts of money that were associated with all of those programs and services that were transferred to health are still existent and are still being funded?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** As far as I can recall. I'm searching my mind quickly as to whether there was any exception in that regard or if something was deemed more sport than health promotion, but I don't believe so.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Next question—those ones are all disconnected. The next question has to do with chronic pain management. I've tabled a number of order paper questions on that issue, but given that you are both there, is there anybody presently working on a chronic pain management strategy? Are there any studies that are presently being reviewed? Is there hope for action? Anything you can share?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that out of our narcotics working group, the narcotics group that we pulled together, that was an issue that was very, very clearly articulated—that while we want to do everything we can to prevent illicit use of prescription narcotics, we needed to be there for people who have a legitimate need for pain relief.

I can tell you that I have had conversations with people in that world of chronic pain, both providers and patients. I think we have an opportunity to do significantly better when it comes to making sure that people with chronic pain get access to the help that they need. This is an area where there is an opportunity to do better.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop everybody right there. It is now the turn of the government. Mr. Dhillon.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I want to speak a little bit about the OMA negotiations. It appears that the OMA is refusing to assist with helping the government with the economic situation that we're in, but when I speak to doctors in the community, they're happy with what the government is proposing. Could you tell us what the current status of those negotiations is?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Absolutely. You'll remember from that pie chart on the slide deck that was handed out that a significant amount of the money we spend—in fact, it works out to 10 cents of every tax dollar—does go to physician compensation. We have made the strategic decision to hold constant to protect the gains we've made when it comes to physician compensation, but to work within that envelope to find the money to fund the population as it grows and as it ages.

I think in fairness to the OMA, they did come to the table with a fee freeze. That was terrific, but not enough to get us to where we wanted to go.

We proposed a number of fee code changes that reflected a few things. One was the small number of specialties where technology has significantly improved



productivity. It means one doctor can see a lot more patients now than they were able to before. We think those fees should come down to reflect that ability for one doctor to see more patients in the same period of time.

We've got technology-based changes, we've got evidence-based changes. There are some procedures that simply don't improve outcomes for patients. We don't want to pay for those any more. We'd rather spend that money on procedures that do improve patient outcomes.

We proposed a list of changes to the OMA on our first day of negotiations. Unfortunately, that did not spark the kind of debate within the medical community that I hoped it would. I had hoped that the OMA would go to its members and say, "Here's what the government's proposing. What do you think? What are the consequences? What are the unintended consequences?" That debate amongst the doctors did not happen, so we were forced—when the OMA left the table and made no indication of wanting to engage in that constructive problem-solving exercise, we did move forward on some changes. Since then, the OMA continues to refuse to come to the table and continue the conversations, but some doctors have offered to give us advice on how we could actually achieve the same savings going at it in a different way, and we welcomed that. That was actually what we had hoped would be happening through a negotiation process.

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At this point, we continue to hope that the OMA will come back to the table. There is certainly a significant expenditure on advertising that they're making, and, as you know, they're taking us to court.

We really do believe that the vast majority of doctors want to do what's right for their patients; that they acknowledge that they've been well paid. The average doctor has seen an increase in their billings of 75% in just eight years. By any measure, that's a significant increase.

We had a problem before. Ontario doctors were underpaid, and they were leaving the province. So we did have to increase compensation to doctors.

But at this stage, the right thing to do for all patients is to focus any additional new dollars we have on things that will really make life better for patients, and that is things like community care and home care.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you, Minister. I can personally attest to the fact—before this government took office in 2003, doctors and other medical professionals were leaving for the US because of the compensation issue, and now I've heard of examples where doctors are coming back. So that's a really positive step that we took.

Could you tell us how many more doctors Ontario has since this government took office and how the ministry is going about with the supply and distribution of doctors in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We have increased the number of doctors practising in this province by 3,400—3,400 more doctors. That is a remarkable improvement in a very short period of time, given how long it takes to train a doctor. We've been able to achieve that through a

number of ways. One is, increasing the number of international medical graduates. We've almost doubled the number, maybe more than doubled it. I think we're at 200 now; I think it was 91 before, if my memory serves me correctly. So we've got more international medical graduates getting trained here. More doctors are staying here. More doctors are coming here from other jurisdictions.

And of course, we've expanded our medical schools. We've created one brand new school in the north, and I have to tell you that that is having exactly the desired outcomes. It is attracting people from the north. They're training in the north, and they're staying in the north. That was an important part of our overall strategy to improve access to care and provide more equitable access to care.

So 3,400 more doctors are working today than when we took office.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you. I'm going to pass it on to Mr. McNeely.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you. Minister, how will you plan to achieve the goals for increased access to health care, as set out in the action plan for health care in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** There are many components to that action plan. I went through some of them in my earlier statements, but to recap, we are continuing to increase the number of doctors working in Ontario. We've also got more nurses, more allied health professionals working at their full scope of practice. For example, if pharmacists are granted the ability to provide immunization, that increases access to care for people.

We know, especially when you think of our seniors, that they may well be getting access to lots of care, but it's not coordinated care. So they have appointments with various specialists, but there's no one actually coordinating that care. It may be that they are seeing too many doctors and not getting that coordinated care. That's part of what we see as the role of primary care providers. We want to give those primary care providers—and having access, electronically, to those records will be part of that, where those primary care doctors are responsible not just for the primary care they receive, but for all their health care needs.

There's a lot of work under way in the action plan. We can achieve those results through the tools that government has. We've got some funding levers so we can fund hospitals for procedures not just based on global budgets. We've got the ability to shift growth in funding to certain parts of our health care system. So, as we shift from increasing physician compensation to increasing home care, that will drive that change.

There are a number of levers at our disposal, and we are using them all, but at the end of the day, it's our health care providers, it's our front-line providers, who have been wonderful partners to date and are excited, I think, about the changes that are coming. There are changes; it does mean they might have to do things a bit

differently, but they know that it will, in the end, provide better care for their patients.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The reform is well under way now. I think family health teams are something that I really look forward to, and the nurse practitioners, especially those practices—I think they've all been successful, but I think that really was an excellent move and is one that's proving very successful.

You showed the demographics this morning and you've spoken about the programs for seniors, but there's so much that has to be done there because the old method of 411 and "Take this senior off my hands. I can't provide for them anymore"—which was happening. Early contact with those seniors now is very important, and that's what you're doing.

Looking at what 2036 is going to bring—it's a doubling—how effective is this going to be of the transfer of more care to aging at home and to seniors?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I don't think we have a choice. I think that if we value universal health care, we simply must change the way we deliver health care to reflect the needs of the population. We need to make changes now to meet today's demand, but we really need to accelerate change in order to meet tomorrow's demand.

As I say, I think there's a very strong argument to be made that it's not that we're not spending enough on some of those people with high health care needs, we're just not spending in the right places. If we're spending money on keeping someone in the hospital when that's not what they need, that's a waste of money. It's also not the highest-quality care for them. They'd much rather be home, supported by supports at home. Similarly, we know that about 37% of people going into long-term care don't really need that intensity of supports available in long-term care.

You know, I looked at Denmark as an example of a country that, back in the 1980s, made a decision not to build any more long-term-care beds—zero more—and they have an aging population too. But what they have done is, instead of spending money in long-term care, they have invested in things like supportive housing. I'm thinking of a place in Sudbury I visited there that has a range of supportive housing. The place is a vibrant, happy place, Finlandia—Finlandia in Sudbury?

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, that kind of supportive housing for people who need a little more help, who can't stay home without supports, but sure don't need the intense support in long-term care.

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The other thing that I see in the future is us shifting our approach from people needing to move to long-term care to us providing care in the long term. People who have chronic conditions who need help now, sometimes their needs are more intense than at other times. I see a bright future for perhaps long-term-care homes having some beds where people can come in, get restored back to health and then go back home.

I think there's lots of innovation, but at the root of it is, how much care does a person need? Let's provide all that care, but let's not provide more care than they need and let's provide it in a proactive way so that, instead of having a short wait time for hip replacement surgery, we actually prevent them from needing that in the first place.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** That ad on the television, "Homeowners helping homeowners"—I think seniors helping seniors is a positive way through the organizations that seniors have etc. I am very pleased that we are going in that direction.

How will the health system funding reform be phased in? You've already gone through part of that, but if you could just extend on that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're starting with hospitals and, over three years, we are moving to a funding formula that reflects the services they provide in those hospitals and the needs of their community. Hospitals are under way. Hospitals know what their allocations are; they know what's coming.

We are moving to activity-based payment. If you do 100 hip replacements, we'll pay you for 100 hip replacements. I think this year, we're starting with four procedures that we're doing on an activity-based payment model. Over the next three years I think we get to 31 procedures, so that hospital budgets will slowly—well, over three years; that's not so slowly, maybe—reflect their activities. I know that's the right way to go.

We will also be bringing forward a similar activity-based funding model for home care. Long-term care is really there now because they are paid for the number of people and the degree of support people require in those long-term-care homes.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** But the transformation for hospitals, then: How is that being received by the administration? Because it seems to me, from a business perspective, that's the proper direction to go. How is it being received by the hospitals?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I can tell you, when this idea was first floated, there was strong support for it in principle. Then of course, as people started to see the impact on their own institution, maybe for some, that support wasn't quite as enthusiastic as it had been. But overwhelmingly—and I have to give a shout-out to Ontario hospitals. They understand why their budgets are being adjusted. They accept that. They are working to become more efficient as organizations. I have to tell you that I expected more hospitals to be unhappy with the results, but I have been very proud of our hospitals because, virtually without exception, they understand why their budgets are what they are and are working within those budgets to provide the best possible care. They understand that this is part of a really important system change.

In fact, the Ontario Hospital Association has been a leader in driving system change. They were the ones that argued that if you've got more money to spend, spend it in the community sector. They're aware that for many of the challenges they face, they have the problem, but the



solution is outside their hospital walls. So they've been very good partners.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It's good to see that there will be an incentive to keeping the operating rooms operating in the summertime, not closing them down because of budget constraints. The incentive will be to do more and get paid more, so I think that's great.

How much more time do I have, Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Probably about two minutes.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The birthing centres were covered by the member from the third party, but I have a group in Ottawa—Orléans who are very interested in how that is going. This is an excellent start. We should, within a year, have up in the province—is it two or three?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Two. We're starting with two.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** How do you see it unfolding beyond the two opening?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We do want to get two up and running and see how that goes, but I think there is significant appetite for this. We want to take procedures out of hospitals if they don't need to be in hospitals. If they can be performed safely, at a high quality, at a lower cost, in a way that the people prefer to be cared for, then we want to support that.

I can tell you, I have seen first-hand in my own family the excitement people have with the idea of there being a third option. Currently, women—families—have a choice of at home or in the hospital. I think a lot of expectant families would welcome the opportunity to have a midwife-led birthing centre as a place where they could have their child.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** There's seven of us; we were all born at home.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You were born at home?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Yes, and my sister's family were all with a midwife, in the rural community. I think it's the right direction to be going. Thank you.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Just before we go on to the Conservatives, just to let the members know, there are two additional rounds left, if I've done my math right. Then the last portion will be apportioned equally. So, two full rounds left each.

To the Conservatives.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** To the Minister: I'm going to read a quote from the Auditor General, Jim McCarter, from CBC on October 9, 2009. He said this—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** From 2009?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, ma'am.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Okay.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** He said, "When you have a lack of oversight, that's a lack of appropriate management.... When you get a lack of oversight, you get broken rules."

From my training and consulting days, one of the things I was a strong advocate in, as I was doing a lot of leadership development—and I actually spoke to the Canadian embassy at the United Nations a couple of

times regarding this—we used to say that when it comes to performance, make sure that if you have to take someone aside, you're critical of the performance, not the performer. There's a big difference there, and I'm sure you appreciate that.

What I'm suggesting here is that I'm going to be commenting on performance of the Ministry of Health, so I just don't want you to take it personally. However, you are the minister responsible for the performance of your ministry, and you are the one that must hold people accountable. So, on that note, I'd like to ask you a few more questions regarding the eHealth scandal that we've been discussing already today.

You know that the eHealth scandal—and I stress, the original eHealth scandal—as we're talking about this, I believe that we're witnessing here today the opening of what I would call a salvo of eHealth scandal 2.0, and maybe even 3.0 at this point, because it was caused largely by exorbitant spending on consultants. I remember the Toronto Star article detailing that one consultant charged \$30,000 for 78 hours of work. Now, quick math would say that's almost \$400 an hour. I have to confess, Minister, that's a pretty good gig, if I do say so myself.

But in response to the first scandal, rules were changed about the use of consultants. Is that correct?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That is correct, yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, thank you. But again, Minister, we have it on good authority that eHealth's dependence on consultants has not gotten better; in fact, it has gotten worse.

Are you familiar with the term "fixed-fee contractors"?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, I can't say that I am.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Oh. Okay. Well, I understand that eHealth has deliberately moved to hiring fixed-fee contractors in an effort to skirt the rules governing consultants. Are you aware of that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you, when it comes to consultants at eHealth Ontario, is that there has been a significant reduction. In April 2009, there were 394 consultants at eHealth Ontario. As of March 31, 2011, there were 122; March 31, 2012, we're down to 66; and then as of May 31, 2012, we're down to 53—so from 394 in April 2009 to 53 at the end of May. I think we've made significant progress in reducing the use of consultants at eHealth Ontario.

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**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. Well, we'll talk, maybe, a little bit more about "fixed-fee contractors," which may be a way of getting around that issue of consultants. I would agree that, utilizing the term, you've dropped it down significantly. We'll talk more about that.

As you know, you and your friends at Ornge got into a lot of hot water over Ornge's decision to pay for expensive advanced degrees for its employees.

Ms. Alice Keung, a senior executive at eHealth is presently having her Ph.D. paid for by taxpayers, including her travel expenses back and forth between Toronto and Ottawa.

Just a side note, Minister: I know you have your Ph.D. and I truly respect that. Did you get your travel expenses paid for when you were going after your Ph.D.?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Point taken. I wish we all could have.

Do you care to explain—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My colleague wishes that as well. But on a serious note, could you explain to us how this could be the case; how, in fact, she's getting her Ph.D. paid for by taxpayers, including her travel expenses back and forth between Toronto and Ottawa? Can you explain that, please?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, I can't; no, I can't. What I can tell you is that—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** She is getting it paid for but you can't explain why she's getting it paid for.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is there has been a remarkable change of direction at eHealth Ontario, a complete change of leadership at eHealth Ontario—I'm sorry—at Ornge.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Ornge.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Actually at both—but at Ornge.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Did you know, though, that her tuition was being paid for?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That is not something that I was aware of, that there was a Ph.D. being covered. I certainly did know that certain individuals had MBAs covered, completely not reported to ministry officials. We know that at Ornge there was a culture of real resistance to opening information. The Auditor General himself said that he has been Auditor General for nine years, he has done about 150 value-for-money audits and that he has never seen anything like the culture of secrecy—those aren't his words, but he found it more difficult to get information from Ornge than he has ever seen in any of his other 150 audits.

We had the same problem at the ministry. We did not get information that we asked for, and information that we got was not always accurate, so the decision—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Does that same culture exist at eHealth?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** At eHealth today?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, ma'am.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No. I think we have a very good relationship with eHealth Ontario. I think they are good partners with us.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You made a comment earlier that significant changes have been made in the management at Ornge, as well as at eHealth. I guess one of the things that kind of jumps to mind is: "too little, too late." There's an old saying that once the horse is out of the barn, it's too late. Our concern is—recognizing what you're doing now, however, we're looking at perhaps the mismanagement of funds prior to, which has constituted you having to make these significant changes in the leadership not only at eHealth but also at Ornge.

I guess our concern is that taxpayers' monies have, in fact, gone down the drain. Of course, one of the concerns that I have about that is, how many more cuts to the Ministry of Health's budget will occur at the expense of the taxpayer because, in fact, of the mismanagement of other funds which could have been used more appropriately and more suitably had those scandals not taken place?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I can tell you, first of all, we're not cutting health care budgets. They are not growing at the rate that they used to, but we're not cutting budgets.

I can tell you that my determination to get best value for every dollar we spend in health care could not be stronger. My ministry officials feel exactly the same way. We will always be vigilant, and any time there is a situation that arises where those leaders who have been entrusted with two responsibilities—one, to deliver care, and the second, to manage money appropriately—when ever there is a failure of leadership, we will take the appropriate actions.

Overwhelmingly, health care leadership in Ontario is committed to providing better patient care and providing good value for those health care dollars, but whenever a situation arises—and Ornge is one of those situations, where the board of directors at Ornge, the CEO at Ornge, lost sight of their responsibility to the public—I will take action. I make no apologies for that, no apologies whatsoever, for taking that appropriate action on those rare occasions when it does occur.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Patient care is critical, and I agree with that. The concern that we have, of course, has been the mismanagement of funding. Someone has to take the bullet, so to speak, for that mismanagement of funds.

You say that you're not cutting costs in health care. Well, then we've lost all this other money. In other words, I'm looking at what I would call ROI, in business terms: your return on investment. What are you getting for all the money that so far has been wasted through Ornge scandals—\$750 million—and the eHealth scandal, which is maybe over \$2 billion in total? Not a whole lot of ROI on that as of yet. You're not cutting health—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Can I just—I'm sorry.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Certainly.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have to stop you there.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What you're doing is—you have mistaken something important. We spend money on Ornge. Ornge provides care; it transports close to 20,000 patients a year.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Oh, I understand that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So you're telling me that the money we pay Ornge is wasted?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No, no—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I completely disagree with you. Every one of those patients—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** That's not what he said.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That's not what I said.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —and every one of those patients' families would disagree with you as well. We



invest in Ornge; they provide a service. Were there areas where they were spending money unnecessarily? Absolutely. That's why they're all gone. That's why they don't work there anymore. But for you to total all the money spent on Ornge and just forget about the fact that there have been 100,000 patients transferred in that period of time, I think, is not quite representing reality.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** And you're right. My reference, though, Minister, was to the \$750 million which has been identified as—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What are you claiming as \$750 million?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Everything that has been involved with the Ornge scandal.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That is completely erroneous. That is the total amount of money that has been spent on Ornge, including transfers for all those patients. The Auditor General was asked how much money we were talking about when it came to Ornge. He said maybe \$10 million. So it's a big leap from \$10 million to \$750 million.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'll get back to that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Auditor General was very clear on this. We'll provide you with that quote.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. Minister, are you worried about what the committee will learn when you submit all the documentation that we requested last week? I understand it's very likely that a few senior executives at eHealth are going to have some explaining to do.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Are we back to eHealth now?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes, ma'am. Yes, we are.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're back at eHealth. Okay. So you've requested some information. We'll get that information to you.

I believe in transparency. I believe that transparency is an important part of government. I think that sunshine is the best disinfectant. That's why we opened hospitals up to FOI, because we do believe that the public has a right to that information. That's why hospitals are now posting the contracts for their CEOs online. I think that the more light that can be brought to an issue when it's public dollars, the better.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So if I understand you correctly, you said you believe in open transparency, which is a wonderful thing, and yet you wouldn't allow us to have a select committee back when a lot of this first came to light, way back in late January, early February.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I understand it, the public accounts committee has met for 53 hours. I believe 47 witnesses have come forward. There is a lot of scrutiny under Ornge.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No, I recognize that. It was a select committee.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, I think the public accounts committee is doing a very thorough job. There is significant oversight at Ornge. The Auditor General, the forensic audit team, the OPP, the standing committee—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I couldn't let it go when you mentioned, "complete transparency." I thought I would throw in select committee.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think there's significant oversight at Ornge.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Let me bounce this back to eHealth for a moment, okay? A little while ago, eHealth made headlines when it approved significant bonus packages for its employees. At the 11th hour you intervened and eHealth backed down, but according to eHealth insiders, you and ADM David Hallett approved these raises. Is that true?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What is true is that—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Raises were approved and then you cut back?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —I was concerned about bonuses being paid to eHealth. I asked the board of eHealth to take another look at that bonus package, and they made the decision that there would not be bonuses paid that year.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Did you sign off on the raises before they became a political liability?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would have to refer back. What I can tell you is I welcomed the decision of the board of eHealth Ontario to forgo bonuses that year.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Is it yes or no, then, before it became a political liability?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I'm saying is that I would have to go back and check.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You don't recall the reason for your decision on that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This was a couple of years ago now. I would never want to give you information that I wasn't 100% certain about.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. Well, I appreciate that. I appreciate the transparency—at least the openness. Hopefully, transparency follows with that too, Minister.

To my colleagues, do we have anything else you'd like to add?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Absolutely. Mr. Chair, I have a letter that I'd like to distribute to the committee—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Sure.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** —in the spirit of openness and transparency.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I trust you're going to give me a minute to read this.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Absolutely. Well, maybe I can speak without asking a question as you catch up to speed. I will highlight certain sections that I wish to point out as we do that.

One of the things that I think we've—

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Point of order.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Before we accept this, I think the record should note that this appears to be an anonymous letter. Would you agree that that's what it is?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** That is correct.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** By person or persons unknown.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** All right.

A point of order?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The point of order was that we've just received this. As you point out, there's no signature on it. We'd like a short recess so we can read it before the minister is asked questions on it.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Is it the committee's agreement that there is a short recess? How much time do you have in mind? Ten minutes?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Possibly; 10 minutes at the most.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. There will be a 10-minute recess so that all members may read this document.

*The committee recessed from 1403 to 1413.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay, I call the meeting back to order again.

I don't know what the member wants to do with this. We don't usually accept anonymous letters in committee, but you have handed it out and everybody has read it.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We asked a number of questions today with respect to things that are going on in eHealth and in the Ministry of Health.

I want to go back, before we delve into some of the other issues before us, to page 2, paragraph 2, where it states that the Ph.D. that is being paid for—the salary of Ms. Keung is \$245,000 and change and that, as this letter claims, this Ph.D. is being paid for, including travel between Ottawa and her home.

Minister, we are in a period of austerity. My question to you is: Given that we are in this period of austerity, do you think it's a good thing for us to be paying for Ph.D.s for employees who make more than \$200,000?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This is a bit unusual, an unsigned letter. There are many allegations and suggestions in this letter. I think what I would like to do is actually do a little bit of homework, a fact-check on some of these allegations.

What I can tell you, though, is that when it comes to the eHealth bonuses that we were talking about a moment ago, I did not have any prior knowledge, so I know that one part of this letter is factually incorrect. There was no correspondence between David Hallett and myself on this issue. I know that is false. Until I read it in the paper, I did not know that eHealth was proposing bonuses for their employees, and when I did become aware of that, I did talk to eHealth Ontario and asked them to reconsider that decision.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Notwithstanding this example, which, of course, came from a whistle-blower, an anonymous source, in generality I'm asking, do you believe it would be acceptable in a period of austerity to be paying for the travel costs and for the degree, a Ph.D. in this case, of an employee who makes more than \$200,000?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's very difficult for me to comment on something that I do not have the context for.

I do know that the Ontario public service does have a program for employees in the OPS to upgrade education. Perhaps the deputy—maybe this isn't fair to ask him, but

perhaps he could share what we know about that program for OPS employees and we can get more information on that.

But I really can't respond to something where I just simply don't have the necessary context.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Again, Minister, I'm just trying to get a sense of whether we could get an understanding of—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to have to cut you off. You have one more 20-minute time, so—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Sure.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Point of order, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Point of order.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Could we have on the record here that this is an unsigned, fact or fiction, letter?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I believe, as the Chair, I identified that immediately upon receipt.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** It is part of the record, and it has been reiterated several times. It is not signed. We have no way of knowing who the author is.

Ms. Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** As interesting as this letter is, I'm going to be talking about long-term care. I would like to know if I could get the number of paid hours in long-term care by nursing and personal care classifications and have this by the different homes: for-profit, not-for-profit nursing homes; municipal homes for the aged; charitable homes. This is a little chart that I ask for quite often, and it hasn't come as of late, so I figured today would be a good day to ask for it again. It's basically the hours paid for nursing and personal care, with the personal care classification broken down into RN, RPN, PSW, and then by classification of homes—and have this as to as recent information as you could give me.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just for clarification, this is a document you have received in the past?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes. I've requested the same thing pretty well every year. I used to get it every three months; now I ask for it once a year.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Okay. Ministry officials will know exactly what it is you're looking for.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, they will. They have done it before. Do you recognize this, Mr. Rafi?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I believe so, yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, you have submitted those before.

That brings me to the next one. Would you ever consider putting that type of information either on a website or on someplace where it is accessible? I would love it to identify the specific homes, but even if you don't identify the specific homes, drill it down as much as possible so people can use it as a source of information.

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**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I only hesitate because I'm not sure what—well, yes, subject to personal health information and so on, we would have to check with the homes themselves and what our MOUs say with the homes, through the LHINS, as well.



It sounds, on the face of it, that it's a reasonable request. But we do have for-profit publicly traded organizations, as you know, so I hesitate there, because I don't know what implications that has for them, if any.

Again, we'd need to check. It's a fairly specific request for the amount of nursing. I think you want the nursing and personal care hours for RN, RPN and PSW by home type.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Correct. That's the way you usually—

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** For all 600-and-some homes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** For 630 homes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes. Usually you break it down into nursing homes for and not for profit, municipal homes for aged, and charitable homes. I have the “for” category, and then you put down RNs, RPNs etc.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Right, okay, but it is aggregated by those categories.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, it is.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Okay.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If this could be made accessible online, that would be a step in the right direction, and if we can drill down a little bit further and have it by LHINs or have it by—it would be worthwhile information.

I get that information from you on a regular basis, and I do use it lots. I show it to people who come; I share it with people who have to make decisions about which home to select etc., so I thank you for this.

The next question has to do with the Casa Verde inquest. Has there been any new follow-up as to the coroner's recommendations following this tragedy? Is anybody following it up? Do you know if any more of the recommendations have been implemented since we talked about this last time, a year ago?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to get you an update on that, to make sure that we've got the right information—unless you can speak to that.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** At my fingertips, I do not, no.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I'm sorry.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No, that's okay. If you take it down on your long list as one more—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Long and growing.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, the long and growing list.

The next one has to do with Mrs. Sharkey and the long-term-care implementations committee. Will the report be released publicly? Not her initial report; this one, we've had for a number of years, but she did more work on the implementation of it, and that report has not been made public yet.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I'll have to check as to whether we have a plan to do so.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How do you decide those things, whether those recommendations become public or not?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Again, this is not specific to Ms. Sharkey's report per se, but if we were asking for some advice based on the recommendations, to say, “How

would you go about implementing this? What's the model?”, given her deep experience, we might just go about acting on some of her additional advice.

If it was a more formal implementation report, then it might be received in such a manner and then be tasked out for implementation. That could take sometimes many months, many years, depending on the nature of those recommendations. That sector, as you know, is a very diverse and dispersed sector with all manner of ownership structures. I think that that has a direct impact on the ability to implement many recommendations that might come from reports of this nature.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right. My next question also has to do with long-term care. This one is on wait-lists for your preferred long-term-care home. I would be interested in knowing the 10% that have been waiting the longest. What are the ranges of times that the 10% that have been waiting the longest has been waiting to get their preferred home?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important that people—I know you do, but others—understand that a wait-list is a bit of a misnomer, because access to long-term care depends on what your needs are. The CCACs are looking at who most needs this bed when a bed becomes available. The length of time may well have more to do with the preferred space.

We do know that there are some long-term-care homes in this province that provide specialized care, particularly perhaps around language, so that they're culturally specific long-term-care homes. There's a significant demand for those, so people do choose those long-term-care homes and the demand exceeds the supply.

We'll get you the information that we can on long-term-care wait times, but I just think it's important to acknowledge that the length of time you've been waiting really has less to do with getting placed than with your needs at that particular time, relative to others'.

We are very much working on making sure that everyone who goes into long-term care actually needs those kinds of intensive supports. As we strengthen supports in home care, we know that we're going to be able to support more people at home. There are people today living quite independently who would have been destined for long-term care. They were designated in the hospital as people who should be going to long-term care, and actually, after a certain period of recovery, they're doing just fine on their own, perhaps with some supports. There's a lot of change happening in that right now.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would have no problem with you putting in a caveat in all of this, but there are still people who are waiting out there; there are wait-lists that exist. I'm guessing that we can bring those together at a provincial level to give us kind of a bird's-eye view as to—I chose the 10%, but you can give me the whole list if you want to.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I think, as the minister said, the type of individual who waits the longest is looking for a very specific type of home: religious, ethnic, cultural and lin-

guistic requirements. That's the top 10% of waits, which is logical.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The other issue that we're very focused on is looking at people who have been waiting the longest in hospital, looking at those real outliers, people who have been maybe designated ALC for months, perhaps because they have a behavioural problem. That's why we're investing more in behavioural supports, to get those people into a more appropriate place. Sometimes, it's hard to place smokers, so we need to accommodate particular, individual situations.

One thing that we're starting to see some success with is that people who are on ventilators don't have to stay in hospital. They can go elsewhere and get that care. And in some of those individual cases, there's not a system solution; there's one, individual solution for that person.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I think we all have them in our offices.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** The average is under 90 days, for all clients.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, I was looking at the—

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Right. The top 10% would be linguistic/religious/ethnic. But to the minister's point, if you happen to be an individual who has that need but in ALC, then it drops very dramatically from there—very dramatically. The priority on someone who has high-acuity needs is there.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm willing to take all of that info in. If you send it my way, I will look at it all.

The next one is another stat that I ask for quite regularly. I don't think it has changed a whole lot, but just in case—the breakdown of for-profit versus not-for-profit: not the number of homes but the number of beds: Where are we in that division? You usually send that response here again with nursing home, home for the aged, municipal home. I don't care how you break it up, but at the end of the day, I'm interested in looking at the number of beds in the for-profit sector versus the not-for-profit. I know the sector enough to know that there are many players in there.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Top line, approximately, or an estimated number of beds: It's 77,400, with for-profit at 53% of those beds, and—I'll round up—47% of those beds are not-for-profit.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And that hasn't changed too much.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No, it's the exact same number I had before.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Very good. The next one is the inspections done in the long-term-care homes. There seems to be a shift so that, rather than having regular annual inspections, now the inspections are triggered by complaints. I just wanted to know if this was actually happening or if it's not.

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**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** There are two kinds of inspections. There are those that are triggered by com-

plaints and, depending on what the complaint is, that will be dealt with immediately. Then there are RQIs, which are more intensive. In fact, I think it takes a team of people 10 days, if my memory serves me well on this, to do a very extensive inspection of a given home. Obviously, the priority is given to those where there appears to be a problem that needs to be addressed immediately. Both of those inspections are done—I think we've had this conversation in the House—there's an inspector in each home—on average just under four times per year. Some of those would be the RQI and others would be because of a reported incident or a—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Specifically for the regular annual inspection, RQI as you call it, I would like to know how many were done in 2010, in 2011, and the numbers that have been done so far in 2012. I understand that they are inspections that are done following complaints—if you have those numbers you can throw them in, but I'm mainly interested in seeing what kind of a trend we are seeing for annual inspections.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just to be clear, the RQIs began in 2011.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, so 2011.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We will get the information on that as best we can.

What I can tell you is that in 2003 there were 59 inspectors, and now there are 81. This includes seven new ones that have recently been added. Last year, on the 630 homes, there were 2,430 inspections completed.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And does that include both—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's all kinds of inspections, yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That's all kinds. Okay. If I could have the breakdown as to—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We'll do our best to get you that information, but we are training people up so we'll be doing more of the RQIs.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would be interested in knowing, when you do do an annual inspection and you find there needs to be some corrective action, how long before the follow-up is done to make sure that the corrective action has been acted upon—kind of the average time between, “We did the annual inspection. This needed to be corrected”? How long did it take before that work gets done and we checked that the work has been done, if that's how it works?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think the answer to that would depend on how serious the problem was: Some would require immediate remediation; others perhaps longer. What I'm going to offer to you is, if you would like a briefing with the people who do those long-term-care inspections, they would have more detailed knowledge.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will take you up on that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's great.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sounds good.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** It might be more efficient and effective as well, because the minister's quite right; there is a tiered effect of the inspection as to corrective action. It



may have to be done immediately or risk some other more significant sanction, or it may have some period of time.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The other thing that's happening in long-term care that is really improving quality for the participating homes, and there has been significant uptake for this, is the Residents First program, where they're actually developing quality improvement plans, and the front-line staff are charged with the responsibility of identifying and fixing problems. I've had the pleasure of meeting some of those front-line staff who were very pleased to show me the progress they've made, whether it's the number of falls or pressure ulcers or various quality indicators. There's very good work happening in long-term care.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I have heard about them too, and some of the people involved are a little bit, sometimes, reluctant in homes where things don't go that smoothly between management and workers. There have been some issues. One idea that was put forward is that the process that is used by the Ministry of Labour to get information from workers could be used by the Ministry of Health also, so that you make sure that there is freedom of speech for the workers to participate in those. In some homes it goes very well. In some homes, labour-management tension leads to a breakdown in that process, and the Ministry of Labour has developed very good ways to make sure that workers have an opportunity to have a say into a similar type of improvement mechanism. That was one suggestion that was made. When they work good, they do good work; sometimes they don't.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's good advice. Thank you.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I had a series of questions regarding inspection and follow-up, but if I'm going to get a briefing, then I can leave those aside and ask them when I get the briefing? All right.

Then I will go to a few odds and ends that I hadn't had a chance to do. One of them had to do with a report that came out in 2009—it's a little bit dated, but it was very good. It was called Raising Expectations. It had to do with assisted reproduction in Ontario. More specifically, they were looking at people—young men—who become sterile following cancer treatment for the genital area and how they basically cannot conceive and would very much like to have the help of their government to be able to have a family.

There was some good stuff in this report. Where is it at and is there any intention of implementing any part of it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That expert panel, as you remember, looked at two issues.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** The adoption issue.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The adoption issue, and we've moved on many of their recommendations on that front.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Yes, most of them.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm really pleased to see that. On the issues around funding IVF and so on, we're

watching the Quebec experience very closely. You may know that they now fund IVF. This is not a time in our fiscal cycle where we have many opportunities to fund new services, but the argument that the report made was that it actually reduced costs related primarily to multiple births, so we're looking at the Quebec experience and learning from that.

I know that this is an issue that families would like some help with. I think we will continue to follow very closely what's happening in Quebec. I obviously cannot make any commitments. I think all of us feel, when we hear individual stories, that it would be great to be able to help, but at this point it's not something we're moving forward on.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop you there. That's the time. On to the government.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Hi, Minister. You've done some great work so far. I know that you've got some challenges ahead, but you've also done a great job in meeting some of the challenges in the last couple of years, so I'm proud of the work that you've done and I'm happy to be on your team, that's for sure. Great work on answering some of the challenging questions today as well.

Prior to the summer recess, Minister, we heard some discussion regarding quality of foods in our local schools. There's one party in particular who would like to have cheeseburgers and French fries on a regular basis. I think this side of the House would rather see healthier foods to combat obesity, instead of supersizing everything. Could you tell us what our government is doing to work on childhood obesity in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I spoke about this a little bit in my earlier remarks. We have a very serious problem of childhood obesity. We see very clearly that the rates of child obesity are increasing. We know, as sure as can be, that that problem today will manifest itself not too far down the road in increased health costs. It's also, from the perspective of the kids, not the way I think they'd want to live their life.

**1440**

We have set ourselves a very ambitious target: Reduce childhood obesity by 20% over five years. That is a very ambitious target, but it reflects the seriousness of the problem. We know that, whether it's heart disease or diabetes, the future for these kids isn't as healthy as it could be.

We've pulled together a fantastic group of people, who are prepared to give us advice on how to have healthier kids in this province. This group is meeting. They are seeing the perspective—they know there's not an easy solution to this. There are many different factors. Some of it is about the food that our kids eat, but then you have to understand why it is they're eating that kind of food and what we can do to get healthier food to them.

There's the whole issue of activity. As a government, we've introduced 20 minutes of daily physical activity in our schools.

We do have healthier food in our schools. We do think—and I think we differ from the official opposition

on this—that when kids are in our care, in our schools, the food they get should be healthy food. I just completely reject the idea that healthy food can't be tasty food. Healthy food can be very tasty food. We don't have pop machines in our schools anymore; we've got healthier options available for kids. I think we have to not turn our backs on what we've done, but we have to actually do more. I'm looking forward to the report of the Healthy Kids panel.

I just know that there are some things government can do to have a healthier population of young people, but I tell you, government will not be able to do it all by ourselves. This is part of a societal change. Everybody's going to have a part to play, no one more important than parents and family, but it will also involve schools and after-school opportunities for kids to get out and play and be active.

When I met with the Healthy Kids panel, I was pleased to hear that they were also understanding the psychology of obesity, that it's not as simple as "eat less, run around more." There are reasons behind why some specific subpopulations of our children are facing particularly high rates of obesity. You look amongst our aboriginal kids; child obesity rates are extremely high there. There's no question that there is a socio-economic difference, that kids in low-income families get filled up with more carbohydrates than fresh fruits and vegetables. That's part of an economic reality for them.

There's a lot going on. It's complicated, but I just know that if we all work together, we're going to be able to fulfill our dream of making Ontario the healthiest place to grow up and grow old.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Minister. I think a healthy lifestyle is just a matter of habit as well. My stepdaughter, Leah, she'll eat fruits and vegetables and olives and yogurts if you provide it to her, but if the chips are there, she'll take the chips.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, we'll go to the chips first.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I think you're on the right track. As well, I don't know if you could comment on this, but our lifestyles have changed. There's more computer; the kids aren't as active. You touched on active lifestyles. Perhaps you could, if possible, maybe elaborate on some of the advice you think you might be getting from this panel when it comes to lifestyle changes. How do we get the kids away from the computers? Are there any discussions on that, to get them more active?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I really do want to respect the panel. They're looking at the research. These will be evidence-based recommendations. I think it's too easy for us to have the solutions to the problems, so let's look at the research. Let's see what has been successful. Let's see how we can make sure kids have the healthiest possible life.

Some of you maybe were listening to Cross Country Checkup on CBC radio yesterday. They were talking about camping and getting kids away from the screens

and into the outdoors—hikes in the woods. It's good for your body, and it's good for your mind.

I think there's work we all have to do, and I can tell you that if we want to achieve our goal of 20% reduction in five years, there will be lots of work for all of us to get back on the right track when it comes to our kids.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you. We'll move to another topic: the narcotics strategy. I might have a couple of other questions on nurses as well, depending on how much time we have.

What are we doing as a province to try to reduce—I know you touched on it earlier in your slide deck—prescription drugs, narcotics, controlled substances, medications that people are getting addicted to, and how are we trying to get them off those? Do you have any comments on that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, we turned to experts to come together from their various perspectives and experiences to develop our narcotics strategy. I can tell you that the people who came to be part of that strategy brought with them an absolute determination to really drive some change. We've moved on many of those recommendations.

When we can prevent an addiction, that is the best. Our doctors, our dentists, our other prescribers need to be educated on what is appropriate pain management. That work is under way.

We have the database now that actually will be able to capture prescribers, dispensers and individuals who are abusing prescription narcotics.

OxyContin is now off the market, and OxyNEO is on the market now, OxyNEO being a tamper-resistant form of OxyContin. OxyNEO is available only through the Exceptional Access Program, so it's not something that can be prescribed as easily as OxyContin was.

The reliance on prescription drugs has been devastating in all of our communities. It is a very, very serious public health problem.

I have written to the federal minister—and they will have a proposal on the generic form of OxyContin. I have asked the federal minister to direct her officials not to list that for sale in Canada, because we now finally have OxyContin off the streets, and the last thing we need is for an even cheaper form of the same drug to be back on the streets. I'm hoping that she will pay attention to that request. I know that other health care professionals are making the same request. We can't always control what comes across our borders, but we can control what is sold in our pharmacies. I think it's very important not to reintroduce that very problematic drug into Ontario.

We've also got the treatment for people who are addicted. We are monitoring very closely what's happening on the street. We had hoped that removing OxyContin would actually trigger some people to actually choose this moment to come into treatment, so we want to make sure that we've got treatment available to people who are ready to address that.

There's a drug called Suboxone. For many people, methadone is very helpful in getting off opioids.



Suboxone is another drug, and we've made sure that it's available through Exceptional Access, but we're making sure that when there's an application, they get an answer within three days.

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We're really speeding up access to Suboxone, and we've seen some very compelling success stories, particularly in our First Nations communities, where they combine Suboxone treatment with culturally based programming and supports. It's extraordinarily moving to have people talk about their journey and how they finally got the help that they needed. We've got chiefs who have declared states of emergency in their communities because of addiction to prescription narcotics. We've seen communities devastated. In some communities, I've had chiefs tell me that 80% of their residents have an addiction.

We're also focusing on pregnant women who are addicted, because that is a very specific medical condition. We need that baby to be as healthy as can be, but we know that a baby born to a mother who is addicted is also addicted. We need to be there to support the woman through the pregnancy, and that child when the child is born. So there are a number of initiatives that are happening across the province.

I'm not naive enough to think that just removing OxyContin from the streets is going to solve any problems. We know that addiction is complex and that people will look for other options, but we need to be there to prevent addiction in the first place and to support people when they're ready to take the step to deal with that addiction.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** That's a very good point, because you're touching on something that's very close to home for me. There's someone very close to myself who—they're foster parents and they do have a baby about three to four months old. The mother was addicted, and now they're looking at probably a lifetime of operations and special care that's going to be required.

If we look at the costs of perhaps dealing with addictions early on and preventing, as we're doing, I think that's great, because the cost to not only the quality of the human life but the cost to maintain a good quality of life is excessive as well. Keep up the good work on that. That's great.

How much time do we have, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** If I could, there was something I should have added.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Oh, sorry.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The development of a narcotics strategy was one of the recommendations from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, which was a three-party committee that did extraordinarily fine work. I know France was on that panel, and others. I just wanted to pay tribute to the members of that committee, who gave us the advice to move forward on that.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Good.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And you have about five and a half minutes.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Does anybody else want to go, or do you want me to keep going? I have one more.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Just pass the time.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** No, no—unless you want to take a break.

Minister, I recently visited, in Hawkesbury, the family health team there. I was extremely impressed. It was my first opportunity to see the good work they do. The enthusiasm coming out of that particular facility is extraordinary. They're getting up and going, and they're ready to continue.

Maybe you could just talk about some of the great components of what the family health teams do and the benefits they provide to a community of, say, 9,000 or 10,000, such as the Hawkesbury area, perhaps. Could you elaborate?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Under Minister Smitherman we began to open up family health teams, and I can tell you that they are a wonderful success. Whether it's the patients, who have access to services they would otherwise not have access to in a coordinated way, or the providers, who can get their patients the care they need and work in a team-based setting—they really are a great model of what we can do when we all work together.

We have now 2.8 million people who are rostered at family health teams. As I say, I think the patients, the providers would all say that this is an excellent model of care. The Auditor General has given us some advice on what we need to do to ensure that we're getting best value for money, and we are, of course, following up on the Auditor General's recommendations. But from a quality-of-care perspective, I think they are doing extremely well.

One of the things I talk about is access to care when patients need it, so that they get the care they need from their family doctor and they don't have to go to the emergency department; 168 of the 200 family health teams do have same-day/next-day appointments now, as part of the way they book patients. What they do is they reserve a block of time every day—several hours, usually—for same-day/next-day appointments. It takes some adjusting when they begin to schedule their time differently, and I think it looks a bit scary for them to see blocks of empty time. But what they're learning is that time does get filled up. When we have so many people going into emergency departments who say they would go to their family doctor if they could get care when they need it, we know that that shift to same-day/next-day is absolutely the right way to go. We are inspired by that, and we want to see more of that across the province.

When I hear of a mum who has a baby with a suspected ear infection and she calls the family doc and they say, "Come in a week Thursday"—no mum is going to keep their child, who's in pain, away from the care they need for that length of time. When your child has an ear infection they need to get treated, and they need to get

treated right away. Too many of those folks are having to go to walk-in clinics or emergency departments.

Family health teams are proving to be a great success. We've gone from having to work hard to get doctors to participate in family health teams to, now, a lineup of doctors who want to be part of a family health team. It's one made-in-Ontario initiative that is very positive.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Excellent. Finally, you recently announced the creation of 900 new nursing positions. Could you explain, perhaps, where they're going? Do you know whereabouts they go across the province? Is it more in the city of Toronto? Is it dispersed proportionately?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, they're geographically spread out right across the province. I can give you what these nursing positions are at a high level.

So 126 of them are rapid-response nurses. They work with people—maybe I used the wrong term earlier today. They work with patients who have been discharged from hospital. They're seen within 24 hours at their own home to make sure that they are connected; they've got the right follow-up appointments; they have their Meds-Check done; they're settled; they've got the right home care supports—so 126 rapid-response nurses to care for people who are being discharged from hospital.

Two hundred of them are for long-term-care homes, to care for people with complex and challenging behaviours. It could be a form of dementia or another challenging behaviour, where extra-special care is required.

There are 191 telemedicine nurses to support patients as they do that remote hookup through the Ontario Telemedicine Network.

There are 144 nurses in schools, and they are focused on students with mental health and addiction issues. Again, it's about identifying those problems early. You know that when there is a student in school who is suffering with a mental health problem or an addiction issue, it affects far more than just that one student; it affects the whole classroom, it affects the teachers. We know we can do better by identifying those students earlier, by attaching them to the right supports earlier. Hopefully, a little intervention early will prevent a much larger intervention later.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm stopping you right there.

The last full round: to the Conservatives.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, I'll change track just slightly from eHealth. I'll give you a bit of a break on that. I know my colleague will come back to that halfway through this session.

**1500**

I wanted to get to June 20. That was the last question period that we had here at the Legislature, and I asked you about the evaluation of the Niagara ambulance communications pilot project. Now, your answer entailed a lot about how nice our local police chief is, and I will agree with you, he is a good guy. But I wanted to get to the bottom of the question; I'm hoping that we can do so today. I'll start off simply by asking if you will table the

report evaluating the Niagara EMS dispatching pilot project in full to this committee today.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will take that request, as other requests from the committee, and we'll see what we can do. I can—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm looking for a yes or no, actually. Will you table that report that I'm asking for as a member of the standing committee, as per section 110(b) of the standing orders? Will you table that report today, in full? Yes or no?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will look into the feasibility of doing that, and if I can, I will.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So that's a yes?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that I met with Regional Chair Ken Seiling. I met with the—I forget his name—the CAO, I think, of Waterloo region. John Milloy set up a meeting; he attended as well. We had a very good conversation about this particular issue.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** During that meeting, Chair Seiling asked for the ability for the region to control regional dispatch of ambulance.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That was the reason for the meeting.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Did you say yes or no to that request?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I said is that we would work with the regional municipality. We have a provincial ambulance dispatch system now that supports care across the province, so to take Waterloo region out of that provincial system is not something that I would take lightly. It's important that we have a provincial ambulance dispatch system. But I do think, coming from that meeting, that it's important to me that the ministry understands the issues raised by Waterloo region—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Good.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —and that we work together to find solutions that meet the interests of everyone.

I am very pleased that we are moving forward as a pilot project in the Waterloo region: the simultaneous dispatch of fire and ambulance. That will get care to people faster. That is an important step, and I suspect that you are pleased that your region was chosen as a pilot for that. We will look forward to the results of that pilot.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Just for the record, I want it noted that I have asked for that report evaluating the Niagara EMS dispatching pilot project to be tabled to this committee or delivered to the committee, as per those standing orders, reference 110(b), within 30 days.

Minister, back to that: Why was the Niagara ambulance communications pilot project commissioned in the first place?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That would have predated my time as minister, I believe, so I'm not—have we got someone who can answer that?

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Patricia Li, ADM—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You are aware of the fact that the region does control dispatching in Niagara; correct?



**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes; and also Toronto and Ottawa have slightly different dispatch systems. I'll ask Patricia Li to answer your question.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So my question to the minister, obviously, was why the Niagara ambulance communications pilot project was commissioned in the first place and was it actually a way to find a better delivery model for EMS dispatching services in Ontario, for Niagara?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** The information that I have: The pilot project predates my arrival at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, but since my arrival we have made the arrangement permanent with the Niagara region.

The pilot was established as a technology upgrade to test dispatch technology. It wasn't set up as a pilot to test the delivery system. That was my understanding. So when you were asking about the Niagara pilot project report, which is really the ownership of the Niagara region, I think the minister is quite correct. We have to look into it and review it with the people who own the report, which is the Niagara dispatch—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So there was a report done at the end of the five years of the pilot, right?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** Yes. There was an evaluation and there was a report. It was conducted jointly by the ministry and the Niagara region. It was to report on the results of the technology of the dispatch system.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Where is that report today? Is it public?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** It is not a public report.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Why not?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** We will look into it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Why isn't that report public?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** Because it is not in the ownership of the ministry. The report is owned by the Niagara region.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** The report is owned by the Niagara region?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** Yes, because as part of the pilot project, there's a condition on the project that the region do an assessment of the project.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Yes, but the ministry conducted the report to evaluate the test pilot, so that was done by the ministry, not the region—the ministry. The ministry did the evaluation.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** The ministry did not do the evaluation. It was conducted by a consulting firm.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay; the ministry consulted the firm to commission a report.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** It was a condition of the pilot project agreement.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So who paid for the report?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** The Niagara region, through their funding.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** From the ministry.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** I assume that would be the case.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Right. Minister, have you read the report?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have not read the report.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So I can't ask you what you think of the report. My question is, why has the report never been released to the public?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think ADM Li has answered that question, and I think I have committed to looking into the feasibility of releasing it, so we will—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, Minister, many chief paramedics have suggested to me that you won't disclose the report evaluating the Niagara EMS dispatch centre because it proves that regionally operated dispatching is far superior to provincially controlled dispatching. Would you agree with that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I don't tend to respond to speculation, so let's see if we can release that report for you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, a number of regional officials, including officials in Waterloo, where Rob and I both come from, have asked your government to leave EMS dispatching to the municipalities. You can, of course, continue to refuse, saying that any proposal to have a regional dispatch centre should include evidence that such a centre would provide patient safety and produce cost savings. I'm not sure if any one of the three of you can answer this: Isn't that detailed in the report done on the Niagara system?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** No, I don't believe so.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Again, I just want to reinforce the fact that I've asked for that report to be tabled.

I'm not sure, are you aware of the FOI request submitted by AMEMSO for this report?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I leave FOIs to ministry officials.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Deputy, are you aware of the FOI request from AMEMSO to have access to this report?

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** I'm aware of the FOI request, but now I know the requester. I did not know the requester, but I am aware of the request.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It says in here that you're charging municipal association fees for this report, done and paid for by the taxpayer. It says in here that some items may be severed from the records. Why would you sever such information from a report that has been paid for by the taxpayers on an important aspect of ambulance dispatch that can save lives and save the taxpayer money?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** I'm not entirely sure which document you're referring to. If I can read the document?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, I'd love to read the document too, and that's the document I'm referring to as the Niagara ambulance communications pilot project report. Perhaps we'll just leave it at that and hope that that report, in its entirety, non-redacted, gets tabled to this committee within 30 days. I would like to have that noted.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes, but just on that point, just in case it's not abundantly clear, 30 days is the time frame at which time the clerk will send out a reminder. Generally, we expect it within 30 days, but there is no guarantee. If it does not arrive, a reminder will be

sent, but it has been my experience over the years that most of the reports do come within that time.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Not all of them, though.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Would you be kind enough to tell me what AMEMSO is?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It's the association of municipal emergency responders—I can give you what the full name is, but it's the association for emergency responders, AMEMSO.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have enough acronyms to keep track of. I wasn't familiar with that one.

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**Mr. Michael Harris:** I hear you. I'm going to pass it to Rob. I know he's got some other questions on—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you very much. Minister, earlier, my colleague Mr. Harris talked about a report from the Canadian Medical Association Journal. We are able to provide the author of the journal article. His name is Paul Christopher Webster. The title of the article is "Diabetes Registry Overdue, If Not Obsolete." It's found in the June 12, 2012, edition of the CMAJ, volume 184, number 9. It was published on May 14, 2012.

Minister, I'm kind of curious. It seems that we have maybe caught you off guard with this. I'm wondering, how are you made aware of such reports that are affecting parts of your ministry? What's the process involved for people to identify articles—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I believe you're talking about a specific article that appeared in a specific journal. Is that what we're talking about?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Yes. Well, just in general, how are you made aware of issues in your ministry?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have regular and ongoing briefings on various issues. People write to me. People I meet might recommend or even supply me with articles.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Have you been made aware of this article?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I haven't read the article. I did hear that that article had been written.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. We have a copy of that article that we'd like to distribute for you, if we could do that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Terrific. One source of information that I would happily refer members of this committee and others to is HealthyDebate. It's a website that has health practitioners who have very interesting perspectives on various aspects of the health system. There are many sources of information on health care, both in Ontario and internationally.

I do my best to keep abreast, and I count on my officials, obviously, in their particular areas, to be very much on top of the literature.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I would like to ask a question on the last page of this article, the last paragraph. Previously, Minister, you answered in relation to a question that was posed by my colleague here, Mr. Harris—he asked whether CGI had received any funding, and your response was that to your knowledge there were zero dol-

lars transferred. In the last paragraph of this article, it suggests that Infrastructure Ontario has "claimed that a 'value-for-money assessment' from the professional services firm Deloitte and Touche LLP which endorsed the government's decision to pay an additional \$6 million to CGI to develop the project using a privatized funding, operating and ownership model"—a website is cited—"was justified despite the firm's failure to deliver the system on time." Does that indicate that money has in fact been transferred to CGI?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I don't read it that way at all, but I will ask the deputy to comment on that.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I just read the paragraph, let alone the article. I find it interesting that the operative phrase in the paragraph follows the link, which is about the contract, I suspect. Again, I don't really want to speculate.

I would say that the financing associated with an alternative finance and procurement might—and I want to emphasize "might"—explain that \$6-million amount. That doesn't, though, to me, on just one quick listening of the reading, indicate that there's some link to this last partial sentence that follows the Web link in the article.

I'm not trying to be circular, but on a cold read, not knowing the context of what the rest of the article talks about, nor what this reference to \$6 million is, it's the only thing I could speculate on.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Isn't it odd for procurement projects and for companies who have large, multi-million dollar contracts awarded to them by the government not to have a stepped payment plan, where they take a third of the funding upfront to pay for incidentals in the course of doing their work, maybe two months or two years or a period of time later get another third and upon completion get the balance of it? Isn't that the normal practice for companies who are engaged in contracts of millions of dollars, to have some way of getting some money before the actual completion of the project?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I think you're referring to what I would sort of call a pay-as-you-go approach to contracting.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Progress payments.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Sorry?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Progress payments, or whatever.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Okay, or a stipulated sum that you would make progress payments against.

The choice that was made on the diabetes registry was to use a public-private partnership model, or alternative financing and procurement, whereby there are not progress payments until substantial completion, so the financial and delivery risk is with the vendor. That means that upon substantial completion, as dictated in the contract, RFP'd at the outset, a payment would be made because it's substantially complete and it's accepted by the client or the owner of the particular asset—in this case, the diabetes registry.

In this case, it would not be normal to have progress payments or pay-as-you-go in this type of model. That's why I was trying to reference that I thought perhaps the statement about an additional X dollars—although I don't



know about the additional—was given to CGI or part of their privatized funding. That's their financing aspect, but they have to take on that financing risk if they don't deliver.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Why does the government continue to retain CGI if substantially no work has been done on the diabetes registry?

**Mr. Saad Rafi:** I would say eHealth Ontario perhaps wouldn't agree with no work being done on the diabetes registry. I think they feel that there's progress being made. They have, I think, been quite open to say that both parties, eHealth Ontario and CGI, haven't met the mark on timelines. I think both parties feel there's an opportunity to hit the production release and that they're working toward doing that, if I'm not mistaken.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** How do you think Ontarians would respond to some of the comments that we've heard ongoing today with respect to the questions that this committee has posed to you, Minister? I think you've stated on a number of occasions that you recognize that these projects are late, and you've acknowledged that. How do you think Ontarians are going to respond to that, given the fact that they continue to be late, they continue to be past their deadlines? Do you think they'd accept such a response?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important that we go back to what happened when new leadership took over at eHealth Ontario. They took a step back and they looked at the work plans that were in progress, and they developed a new strategic plan so they could deliver on projects, get the best value for money, and see measured, step-by-step improvement and building of our electronic medical records.

We have made significant progress in the last few years under this kind of leadership, this kind of management. There was a decision made, back when the new leadership came into place, to revisit the planned projects that formed part of the whole eHealth initiative. They were very public about coming forward with a new strategic plan that actually made more sense than what had been going on before, when there were a number of projects under way. We have a very deliberate strategy. The people at eHealth have a very deliberate strategy to focus on projects, to get them done. That explains much of what we've talked about today.

When it comes to the diabetes registry, I expect Ontarians to feel exactly as I feel, which is, "That should have been done on time." It should have been done on time. I have every confidence it will get done, and taxpayers are not going to pay for it until it is done.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** But who's going to be responsible for that?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop you there, because I think that's the time.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thirty seconds.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Oh, sorry; 30 seconds.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** But who's going to be responsible for that, I wonder? Minister, we've seen these prolonged delays.

Also, the Toronto Star is breaking today that your deputy minister has received a contract extension, being the highest-paid bureaucrat in the Ontario public service.

Who's going to be responsible for all the delays and the lateness of things that are going on in your ministry?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, first let me say that I am delighted that our deputy has chosen to sign an extension to his contract. It is a very challenging job regardless of who is minister, but particularly hard, probably, because I'm the minister. I'm very pleased that he is staying on in the job and, I think, deserves to be well compensated for that.

1520

When it comes to procurement, I just want to make it very clear that our procurement process is much cleaner, much fairer, much more transparent than it was under the previous government—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay, I'm going to stop you there because that's time.

Okay. Final opportunity for the NDP.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Final opportunity. Well, I will pick up a little bit as to what has been driving my colleagues all day—what's happening at eHealth—and pick up on your last comments that you're committed to transparency and accountability and all this. If what I've heard today about eHealth has little based in reality, I think it would help if the minister shares with us how many of the present employees were consultants before, when it was Smart Systems for Health. One way to do this would be: Would you be able to release to the committee the list of hires at eHealth, let's say for the last 12 months, so that we could see the names of the people? We have a pretty good idea of who worked there before, and if you share with us who works there now, it could help put a lot of conjecture to rest.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We will do our best to get you that. What your question really is: How many people who were previously consultants are now employees? That's the question?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Correct. That's the question.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, let's see what information we can get for you.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** What happened in 2009 was a scandal. If Ms. Sarah Kramer was to apply for a job at eHealth today, would she be considered?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I don't do the hiring at eHealth Ontario, but I would wager that the answer to that would be no.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It would be no? But I guess it's more of a question of, when we turned the page on that episode and eHealth was put into place, chronic disease management was put forward, and the diabetes registry is something that kind of built momentum. We all saw this as, "This could be an eHealth project that could help us turn the page." Once the registry is in place, we could all see clinical implications for why that would make sense.

But all of this is for naught if what we had before is creeping back in.

I was happy that you shared with us that there are only 50-some consultants left at eHealth. Then comes this fixed-fee contractor. Like you, I have no idea what those are, but I would certainly be interested in knowing: Of the people who receive money from eHealth, which ones are employees and who are they? And the consultants—here again, who are they? If there are such things as fixed-fee contractors, who are they, what do they do and what percentage of money goes to those people? I'd like to basically get reassurance that all is not as bad as what I've heard all day today.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important to underline that there is tremendous progress at eHealth Ontario. We've got great success on uptakes of EMRs—60% and growing of family docs. We've got eCHN; that's two million children with electronic medical records. We've got ConnectingGTA—ConnectingGTA is huge. When you get 700 providers able to share information amongst themselves, that is a very, very big step forward in linking information that will have a profound impact on patient care. We've got the drug profile viewer, so that the drugs that people are on are available in those ERs across the province. There is a lot of excellent progress being made, whether it's telemedicine or things like ENITS or the shared diagnostics information. There's a lot of progress that's going on, and I think we maybe hid some of the light under a barrel, because we have seen steady progress when it comes to moving toward that goal of everyone in Ontario with an EMR by 2015.

We're on the way, and it's going very well. Is it going perfectly? No, and the delay on the diabetes registry is one of those that—I am very disappointed that we don't have it up and running. The vendor has not met the deadline that was set—not for lack of work by people at eHealth and Infrastructure Ontario and in the ministry.

We're moving forward, and it's very good progress.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I guess, in some circumstances, I'm willing to accept a setback. Only people who do nothing never fail.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Exactly.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** What I'm not as willing to accept is that if the culture that was there before, of executive compensation and use of consultants, of sole-sourced procurement—it seemed like the page had been turned. There were clear guidelines regarding procurement. There were clear guidelines regarding executive compensation etc. Are those guidelines still clear? Are they being followed? Do we know that they are? Are the consultants that are there—and whatever those fixed-fee contract people are—who are they? What does that mean? I've sat there, like you, for seven hours, and my colleagues have used their part of the seven hours to focus on this solely.

As I said, I'm willing to say they tried really hard; they failed in one area; they succeeded in others. But I'm not willing to give consultants an open credit card to government resources.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And neither are we. There is very strong oversight at eHealth Ontario. The procurement rules are adhered to. We have a Fairness Commissioner to ensure that procurement is fair. We will continue to drive the kind of change—but there is a new culture at eHealth Ontario, and there are demonstrated results.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Can I find out how much money is being spent on consultants, and, if those fixed-fee contractors exist, can I find out how much money is being spent on those people and how many are we talking about? We know we're talking 50-some consultants, but are we talking each and every one of them with a \$5-million contract?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We'll get you that information, but I'm sure the answer to that is no. I would love to hear from the official opposition on how exactly they define a fixed-fee contractor. I would look forward to information from them on that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. You've assured me today that the procurement rules are being followed—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Absolutely and rigorously.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:**—and we know that for a fact. The same thing with executive compensation and the same thing with the sole—because we had a lot of sole contracts. None of this is going on anymore.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** None of that is going on.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. We've had one setback with the diabetes registry, which—we hope the rest of them do good, and one didn't, is how you classify it.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Well, any information that you can share as to the percentage of money going out to the different forms of employment contract and human resources, whether they're called fixed-fee or otherwise, I think that would help me feel comfortable that eHealth is going on the right path and had one setback on one of their projects, while others moved forward the way they were supposed to.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It makes perfect sense, depending on the projects that are being worked on at a given time, that people are brought in on contract.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Sometimes that's the right decision to make, so we'll keep that in mind.

I can tell you that the Auditor General gave us some very clear instructions back in 2009, and I can tell you that all of his recommendations have been addressed. So we learned from that experience.

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**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If all of this is good, but I was to look at the list of employees and recognize half of Courtyard staff that is now moved over, I would probably have a little bit of, "Oh. We were supposed to turn the page on those high-priced consultants. I hope they didn't find their way back in through the back door, through some kind of other form of employment."

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You also would know that they report on the sunshine list, so you would see.



**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Yes, true.

Back to other health-related questions: The first one has to do with mental health. I thank you for your mention of the special committee for mental health and addictions. Our number one recommendation, after 18 months and many, many days of hearings, was the creation of what we called Mental Health and Addictions Ontario, basically giving mental health and addiction a home, which they never had. I mean, we had 12 different ministries come to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions to tell us how their little part fits into the mental health and addictions system.

Is there any willingness to move ahead and give mental health and addiction a home at some point?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You know that we released our mental health and addictions strategy, that built on the recommendations from the select committee and from the advisory group that was set up by David Caplan.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Yes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And the first five years of that strategy are focusing—not exclusively, but the bulk of new investment is focusing on children and youth. The Minister of Children and Youth Services is the lead minister on that. The Minister of Education also has an important role to play because schools are where kids are.

We have set out a very clear addictions and mental health strategy that we are implementing. I dare say that that initiative is a direct result of the excellent work that was done by you and by your fellow committee members.

To answer your specific question, are we looking at sending—I think the comparison was made to Cancer Care Ontario. The answer is no, that's not something we're looking at doing right now, but we have a very clear action plan for the next five years, focusing first on children and youth.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Okay. The second question—they're not related—has to do with HPRAC. I have been approached, and I'm sure you have, by many colleges, provisional colleges, for new professions that will be coming under HPRAC. They are confused as to the process that is to be followed. A lot of them are not happy with the reviews that are being done of their scope of practice in the first college that will be put into place. I was hoping somebody could explain to me how you go from having a transitional college to having a college that will be one of the 27 colleges for health professionals.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just to be clear, you're talking about professions where there is already a transitional council?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Yes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That transitional council has a lot of work to do to establish the standards and set in place what will become a college. Each of those transitional councils is doing that work now. Some are moving smoothly, others not so smoothly. That is the job of the transitional council—

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** And what's the relationship to the ministry? How much of the decision-making is with

the transitional council versus with the ministry, and where does the back-and-forth happen?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm not sure who could speak to the transitional councils.

**Mr. Sa  d Rafi:** The assistant deputy minister Suzanne McGurn is not here, but I was part of our health human resources strategy division. That is the division that has very regular interaction with the transitional and all the other colleges. It's not as if we are directing them, but we have a very strong stakeholder relationship with them, as we would with the colleges.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The goal for each of those transitional councils is to do that foundational work so they can be a regulating—

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** A full-fledged college.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —college, so there's a lot of work that has to go into that: developing the scopes of practice, the membership arrangement. There's a lot that has to happen. They've got important and difficult work to do.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Because the complaints that we get are along how the transitional council wants to go in this direction and do the hard work in that direction, and they get told, "No, the ministry wants you to go that way," and then they report back to their transitional membership and say, "No, we won't be able to go this way, the way that the membership wants us to go. We're going to have to go this way because this is what the ministry wants."

The part that I'm not clear on is who has the final decision-making ability and at what point does the transition council become a college that would then be at arm's length from the government to direct their members. There seems to be grey zone where there are a lot of unhappy campers.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's fair to say that some of those transitional councils are moving forward, but they'll never have unanimity. If there are specific transitional councils you've got concerns about, I'd be more than happy to talk to you about those specific transitional councils, but ultimately, the goal is that they will form regulatory colleges where they will be able to deal with complaints from the public.

I think it's important to remind ourselves that those self-regulatory colleges are responsible to the public, not to the profession. Their job is to protect the interests of the public. I never miss an opportunity to remind people that in the checks and balances, those colleges play a vitally important role.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I may take you up on your offer.

The next one is, in April this year, you talked about further reductions in generic drug prices.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** And I was wondering if there is any intention on behalf of your government to move ahead with those.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The answer is yes. That was part of the deal we made on the budget with your

party. So yes, we are further reducing the price of some generic drugs. That work is under way as we speak.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In that work—the last time we did this, there was quite a bit of hardship that was brought upon independent pharmacists, mainly in rural communities, where some of them closed and a big Shoppers Drug Mart opened up in the cities next door. I wanted to make sure that some consideration would be given to making sure that small, rural communities continue to be served by pharmacies and pharmacists through the transition, whichever way that leads us.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** When we were doing the first round of drug reforms, when we cut the price of generic drugs from 50% to 25%, we eliminated professional allowances. We increased dispensing fees, and you will recall that we made significant efforts to keep those small, rural pharmacies viable by significantly increasing dispensing fees paid in those small communities. There were suggestions that we would see a lot of pharmacies close as a result of that. In fact, we've seen a net increase in the number of pharmacies across the province.

We continue to see access to pharmacy care as an important part of—access to pharmacy care is part of access to health care.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Two minutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. The next two questions have to do with the big book that I tried to read.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The big blue book?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, the big blue book. I'll even give you the pages in the English side, which is page 135 and, then again, page 141. They have to do with lines that—we're looking at transfer payments. There are a whole bunch of them: Cancer Care Ontario, Canadian Blood Services, chronic disease management, HIV/AIDS, Ontario Breast Screening Program, and community and priority services. Those people received \$2.6 billion and I have no idea who we're talking about. It's page 135 of the big blue book. They're just above the healthy homes renovation tax credit at the bottom of the page. Who are they?

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**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Those are not agencies per se; those are priority programs that would be net of cancer services etc. etc. We can get you a cross-section or a list of what we call provincial priority programs. They are—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. I would—

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Sorry.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That's all I'm looking for: a list of which programs are included and how much they are getting, because there's a significant amount of money in there.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Right, and a lot of that money would end up delivered via hospitals for various types of initiatives: critical care, CritiCall etc. I might have a breakdown—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, an answer is coming quickly? Oh, wow. But I have one more, if it's going to take you a long time to read it. I want to use my two minutes wisely.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Oh, sorry. Well—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, no. Your two minutes are up.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Page 141, I have another one: ambulance and related emergency services—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Your time is up, but I want everyone to rest assured, the clerk advises me that there was an additional 10 minutes for each party on the next round. Okay?

We have the Liberals next for 20 minutes, and then there is 10, 10 and 10.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I had a few questions. We were talking about lugging around the X-rays for my knee operation when that session was over. How does eHealth benefit rural Ontarians right now? What have we got that we've done that is helpful there?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So eHealth benefits everyone. One of the things that I think about when I think about access in rural Ontario, I can't think of a better example than the Ontario Telemedicine Network. We have experts with a specific specialty where, perhaps, someone would have to travel quite a distance to access that care. With telemedicine, they can hook up with one of the many, many eHealth—I don't want to call them a studio because they're not really a studio, but the access points for telemedicine, and have that face-to-face conversation with that specialist in another place in Ontario. It takes care to people where they are rather than people having to travel to that care. We've heard from France Gélinas that she observes in her community there's great uptake in some areas, not so great in others. We know there's opportunity to further expand the Ontario Telemedicine Network.

The other great example is when there is an accident or some sort of brain trauma or a stroke, that scan can be read by an expert somewhere else in real time. What used to happen was the physician in the emergency department might have a telephone consult with someone else, but they would have to use words to describe the image and would have to use words to describe the patient. Now that neurosurgeon can actually see the scan for themselves and they can say, "Here's what to do." It used to be that they would always err on the side of caution and transport the patient, often unnecessarily, putting a patient and their family through an unnecessary transport and putting unnecessary pressure on our health care system.

There are many examples of how spreading the expertise using technology is exactly what we need to do to provide care for people wherever they are.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** And that's available throughout all rural Ontario pretty well, now?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, I would say we have very good coverage now.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The ConnectingGTA—I've heard about it before and we've talked about it today, but I'd like you to go over that again, if you would. What are the benefits of that program? Why was that one sort of



pushed to the front? There are good reasons, I've heard, but I'd like to hear them again.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** ConnectingGTA links all of the health care providers in the five GTA LHINs. That is close to half the population of Ontario that will benefit from ConnectingGTA. If you can imagine an individual who is accessing different parts of the health care system—a hospital, maybe a second hospital or a third hospital, a community care access centre, other community supports, a range of health care providers all looking after one patient. Before ConnectingGTA, each one of those would have their own files, their own records, take their own history, would not share information from different providers. When ConnectingGTA is up and running, all of that information related to one individual will be on that one electronic database. What it means is much better continuity of care.

It's not unusual for people in the GTA to go to more than one hospital, but if all of your tests and images can be viewed by anyone in any of those other hospitals, it's just better patient care. It's faster access to care. It's a reduction of duplicate, unnecessary tests. All of that information about that individual is in one place that can be viewed by all of the people in that individual's circle of care. It makes so much more sense than having individual files unconnected for the same individual across the system.

We're very excited about this. It's a very ambitious project: 700 providers to be linked up. That work is under way now.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The rationale part was dollars—vying for the dollars, we hear. We have a lot of large institutions, a lot of people, and the mobility across the city. Those were the advantages that were seen and that's why we've gone in that direction. That makes sense.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** When I first became Minister of Health, I had a little focus group with some elderly people and I asked them to give me some advice on my first days on the job. I was surprised the one issue that they wanted to talk about the most was having an electronic health record, because they know that we can be a much more efficient system if we share that information. I think all of us look forward to the day when we have ConnectingGTA done.

I have to also say that in the Hamilton area there has been some very, very good work done there on connecting information from various providers. That information is available there. There is good work being done across the province and, step by step, we're going to get to where we all know we need to be.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I sat on public accounts back three or four years ago when we were looking into eHealth. I found it an extremely interesting exercise. There were many difficulties, but building that platform was the problem. You built the platform but you got no use out of it. We've come a long way since then. Now you're looking at the next 30 months, 2012 up to 2015—36 months is when you will see probably substantial completion of the project?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would say that we're never going to be done. There will always been new technology, there will always be better ways to do it, but that goal of an EMR for every Ontarian by 2015 is within sight. And then, the linkages between providers is the next frontier. Some of that is happening now, but having that EMR by 2015 is where we're going.

We can't do it alone. We can't dictate to family doctors that they have an EMR—at least, we don't do that now. We need to work with them to make sure it works for those doctors to convert their patient records to electronic health records.

1550

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The other issue that we covered when I was on public accounts before and was interesting to me was the safety of patients and C. difficile. I understand that there's new information out on the successes that the hospitals have had. Could you go through that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very happy that you've raised this issue. ICES has just released a report that looks at C. difficile in our hospitals. We have seen over the past three years, I believe, a 28% reduction—have I got that right?—in the number of cases of C. difficile in our hospitals. That's extraordinary improvement, close to 2,000 fewer cases than we had just a few years ago. There is no question in my mind that we have made progress because we have been publicly reporting this information. It goes back to the transparency. If we measure and if we publicly report, we can actually begin to drive change.

When it comes to C. difficile, it requires the co-operation and the engagement of everyone in the health care organization. It's not just a decision that's made at the upper echelons; it's everybody, every single person working in that hospital, regardless of their role in the hospital; every visitor, every patient. We all have a role to play when it comes to reducing the spread of infectious diseases.

One case of C. difficile is one too many, but we've made remarkable progress because people in hospitals have embraced this quality improvement initiative. I'm just enormously proud of our health care workers in our hospitals who have taken on the best practice of washing their hands. Often, it's as simple as that hand hygiene.

We've now got quality indicators. All of our hospitals have quality improvement plans. They choose the indicators, they set the goals. Many of them chose hand hygiene compliance as one of their priority areas in the first year of the implementation of the Excellent Care for All Act.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** How much time left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I am not exactly sure, but I think somewhere around 4 of the clock is when we're done. The clerk is not here, so I'm trying to keep it the best I can.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** One of the areas we didn't cover in here was my mistake. I took you to the demographic challenge, which was very interesting, but the statistical challenge—if you could just tell us about the co-

operation we need from all the workers across Ontario, but specifically in your own ministry.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As you know, our government has a plan to get to balance over five years. We have set, as a government, that priority. We will protect those core services that matter the most to Ontarians. We're protecting health care, we're protecting education, we're protecting social services. But even though we're protecting those areas, the rate of growth will be less than what we've become used to. Because we have significantly increased spending at a rate of over 6% a year since we came to office, we now are at a place where I think, when we all work together, we can achieve better value for money. With that additional spending, we can invest in those priority areas. Other parts of the health care system are going to have to work hard to do better to find efficiencies within.

I have to say that people in the health care sector have embraced this challenge. You've heard of the concept of disruptive change. If you just keep going on and on, year over year, increase, increase, increase, people don't tend to step back and say, "What do we need to change from a system perspective?" Now they're having to do that, and it's a beautiful thing to watch people in the health care system accepting our reality. They know that they've done well in the past, and now is the time to really drive best value for money.

Overwhelmingly, people in health care are looking at ways that they can be part of this change. At the end of the day, we're going to have a better health care system, we're going to have it better for patients, smoother for patients, easier access to health care for patients, and we're going to be fiscally responsible as well.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Home care is an exception to the rule of not having increases. How much more is going to be placed there, and what are going to be the results of that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Because we're holding other parts of the health care system steady, we're able to invest an additional 4% a year in the home and community care sector. We have given the responsibility to the LHINs to allocate that money based on very clear criteria.

The number one issue for me is ALC. When we have a patient in a hospital who shouldn't be there, who doesn't need to be there, who doesn't want to be there but is there because there is not capacity outside hospital, I know we haven't got our system in balance. Getting people the right care in the right place at the right time is our highest priority, and we're seeing some tremendous success stories. My home hospital, London Health Sciences Centre, has seen their ALC rate cut in half since they instituted Home First. These changes are happening, and it's enormously exciting.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I was at a meeting with Alex Munter at one time, and he asked the question—there were 600 seniors in the room—"Who wants to go to long-term care?" Of course, no one did. Obviously, that is the right way.

I mentioned something about nurse practitioners earlier today, that I was very impressed with what they were doing and where you're going. I would just like your comments on nurse practitioner-led clinics—the family health teams and the clinics.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You know you're doing something right when you go outside of Ontario and people are asking about one particular part of the health care system change. I can tell you, when I meet with health ministers from across Canada, one thing they all want to talk about is our experience with nurse practitioners.

We've now got over 1,000 nurse practitioners working in Ontario, some of them in primary care, some of them in hospitals, some of them in long-term-care homes—different settings. These are our nurses who have gone back to upgrade their training, and many of them specialize in a particular part of the health care system. They're providing superb care and very much enjoying the experience.

There's enormous ability amongst our health care providers. Giving people the opportunity to work to their full scope of practice, giving them opportunities to develop new skills is an important part of strengthening our health care system.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Mr. Chair, I'm finished with my questions.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Any other questions from the Liberals? We do have two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Great. Thanks.

I have one short question, Minister, and it's about something I know you're very familiar with: the Niagara Health System. I can still remember, before I was elected as a provincial member of Parliament, the previous government thought the way to improve health care in the Niagara region was to amalgamate all the hospitals, create a single health care system, and off they went. In the last five or six years, I have expressed my concerns that that system that was put in place by the previous government wasn't working.

What you have done—and I just wanted you to give a bit of an update, and this is a great place to do it—is you did bring in a supervisor, which I had been pushing for, just to look at this organization called the Niagara Health System to see if there was a way we could improve it, to see if it could actually function the way it was set up. I was just wondering if you could give us an update on where we are with that review by Kevin Smith, who you've brought in to do that—and I thank you for that.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to thank you for your advocacy on that issue.

As you know, we did send in a supervisor—it'll be close to a year ago now; 10 months, maybe? The reason we sent in a supervisor—every case is different. As you know, this one was difficult because on some measures they were doing fine, but we kept hearing that the community had lost confidence in the organization. Kevin went in and he listened. What he did for the first several months is he went out and listened to staff, to members



of the community. He really wrapped his head around what was going on there, made some big changes initially—much stronger support for patients who have complaints and challenges in the NHS—has started to really rebuild the confidence of people there.

**1600**

He put out a report—a report to the community, not to me—reflecting what he has heard, with some options on moving forward. Right now, we're in that phase where we're looking to the community to respond to that report. I know this is not easy, the questions that he has put to the community, because his recommended option does involve the closure of some hospitals but the building of a brand new one.

I don't have a preconceived notion on what the way forward is, but I know that in your community, in the Niagara area, people know what they want, and we will make sure that they get excellent care and that they will have confidence in the care they receive.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** With that, we're going to stop you. We're going to go to the lightning round: 10 minutes each.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The lightning round.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop you exactly on the second, because we do have to stop on time. You've got 10 minutes each, starting now with the Conservatives.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you. To the minister or deputy minister: Can you provide to us the total number of employees employed at the Ministry of Health? You can just table that for us, I guess.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Sure.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay, thank you.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Do you know the number?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Approximately 3,680.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay, if you can table that, that would be great.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And we'd be happy to table it over time too, because I think you'll see the number—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Sure, sure.

I want to come back to my line of questioning with regard to the Niagara ambulance communications pilot. You may need to call your assistant deputy minister back. I will give you a second chance to correct the record. My line of questioning is, again, to the minister or deputy minister or the assistant deputy minister. Who commissioned the report called the evaluation of the Niagara ambulance communications pilot?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** The report, as I understand, was commissioned as a joint effort between the ministry and the Niagara dispatch, which is the EMS system in Niagara—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So who paid—

**Ms. Patricia Li:** —so it's a jointly owned report.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Who paid for this report?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** I don't know exactly who paid for the report. I would say that because Niagara EMS re-

ceives funding from the ministry, they would use that funding to pay for the report.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Yes. Assistant Deputy, I just got off the phone with a high-ranking official at the region of Niagara and they've not seen this report. I believe PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned to perform this report and this would have been commissioned by the ministry. I need you to inform the committee who commissioned this report and—well, who paid for it, I guess.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** The report, as I already said, was commissioned as a joint report by the region of Niagara and also the ministry. I actually can assure you that the Niagara region has seen the report, because I met with the chief medical officer of health in the Niagara region in 2010 and we discussed the joint report when it was in draft form, so they must have seen the report.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. Again, I've got a motion that I'm going to be bringing up, following this committee, and I'll ask the minister or deputy, prior to us getting to this, if you will table that report in full, unredacted, unsevered, to this committee as per standing order 110(b), no later than August 13, 2012. Deputy?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Sorry; you said you were going to table a motion after this—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm asking you if you will provide the report to this committee by August 13, 2012. The report has been done; it has been commissioned; it's sitting on a shelf. It was done, what, in 2005, 2010—in 2010?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** It was to be done in 2010, because that's when the pilot finished.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay, so it's about two years old. I'm assuming it wouldn't take too long to print off and forward to this committee. Will you forward it to this committee by August 13?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** It's my understanding the committee has the ability to ask for any information, and—I have to acquaint myself with the estimates committee—you have certain rules you've agreed to as to what's in scope and not. As the minister said, we'll certainly look at that and then respond to that request.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Will you also table any costs or fees, including consulting fees, associated with both the preliminary report and the report itself?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Same answer.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Okay, thank you for that. I don't know if you have anything else, Rob.

Again, Minister, you had stated that you had never read the report at all.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No. I'm aware of it and I've been briefed on parts of it, but I've not read it myself.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Were you briefed to the extent that the report actually entails efficiencies in the system and overall benefits that would save lives and reduce overall costs? Should municipalities operate the dispatching system as similar to the region of Niagara?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would be careful that—I think you're speculating on what the results of that report are.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** That's why I'm asking, Minister, because you've been briefed on the report. I'm simply asking you if that report contains information that would assist in efficiencies in both cost and timely access to ambulance service. I would not want to speculate anymore by having you provide that answer to me.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What we've said is we'll undertake to, if possible, get that report to you, and rather than speculating on the content of it, you can actually read it for yourself.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** But I am going to ask you if you would share the name of the high-ranking official in Niagara region who you were quoting, because I think it's important that we ensure—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** No, I don't think it's important. What's important is that this committee gains access to that report, as I had mentioned before, and that the assistant deputy minister stated that it was commissioned by the region, which is wasn't; it was a ministry report. I just want to fact-check on that part of it first.

**Mr. Saïd Rafi:** Just a point of correction: I think we said "jointly commissioned" by the region and the ministry, just to be clear, not just by the region.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I think we're all trying to rethink what we heard, given the long day that we had here, but I think the original reason why we've come back to this question was because it was previously stated that this was a Niagara region report. Now we're hearing that it's a joint effort, and I think that's the discrepancy that we want to pull out, because we obviously have a discrepancy in what I understood to be what the assistant deputy minister had stated. We need some clarity.

I think this is a very important report. There are people in the Niagara region who haven't seen the details of a report that talks about how to make their system more effective. Ultimately, that impacts patients, and that's what we're concerned about. We're concerned about better service delivery for patients. That's why we want to see the report. That's the importance of it.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** I would like to clarify that point. As part of the pilot project, one of the conditions is to have an evaluation of the pilot project after it was completed, which was in 2010. PWC did do that report as consulting services.

The report is commissioned by the ministry, but the result is jointly owned by the ministry and the Niagara region.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So the region will have this report.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** They do have this because I met with them. I met with the chief medical officer of health. I met with the EMS chief. They both have that report.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So the region should be able to provide us that report as well, to any one public member that should ask for it.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** If they agree to.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Why then do I have a letter signed by Patricia McQuade from AMEMSO asking for this report, that 25% of it would be severed at some cost that would exceed \$1,000? Why, if this report is so readily available, did your ministry send a letter to the association asking them to comply with an FOI? Why is that necessary?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** I don't know about the particular letter you're referring to, but I can only assume that's because the ministry has an obligation to report back to cabinet as part of the conclusion of the pilot project and we haven't done that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** The report has been done for two years and you've not reported back to cabinet yet?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Two years.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** What effect does that have? Again, our concern is for patients in Niagara. It's for patients in Waterloo region. It's for patients in other communities that this is going to affect. Don't you think that a delay of two years negatively affects patients in general? Doesn't that delay frighten you?

1610

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Especially when there are calls from other municipalities across the province? London, the area that you represent, Minister; Peel, York, Waterloo region—when they're calling for regional control or regional operations of the dispatch to help increase the likelihood of saving lives in terms of response times, efficiencies, why a two-year delay?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** First of all, I'd just like to summarize what the report is all about. As I said earlier, the project—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Do you have a copy of the report?

**Ms. Patricia Li:** Yes.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** That's why we can respond to you with respect to the data.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But the minister already said that—well, she's been briefed on it.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** She doesn't have it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** She doesn't have a copy of the report. Okay.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** The pilot project is on the technology improvement to the dispatch within the Niagara region, to implement a separate technology, which is separate from the 22 dispatch centres currently in ambulance dispatch, other than Toronto. So I think the pilot, as I can understand it because it is before my time, is to test a new technology and see if it works in Niagara. Five years—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I thought the technology was to evaluate the program—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm sorry, that's the 10 minutes. I told you it would be right on the dot.

NDP?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'll speak very fast. The first is on page 141. It was a little question from the briefing book. It basically talks about "Payment for ambulance



and related emergency services: municipal ambulance,” then, “Payment for ambulance and related emergency services: other ambulance operations and related emergency services.”

I understand fully what municipal ambulances are. I’m not too sure who’s included in the second line.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** Are you referring to the \$64 million?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, I am.

**Ms. Patricia Li:** Okay. The \$64 million is divided into a number of separate components. There is \$14.9 million for base hospitals, \$13.9 million for First Nations, and then we have a number of dispatch centres which we operate under a transfer payment relationship, which is \$15.2 million. There’s \$13.8 million for the critical care land ambulance system, which is run currently by Ornge. Then, the rest of it is just miscellaneous relating to workload increase for the dispatch, which is around \$6.6 million.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you. And I take it that the last one, which, Deputy Rafi, you had started to give me an answer to—that was the one on page 135—I will get the list of what makes up the \$2.6-billion priority programs?

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes, and just generally, or quickly, about \$1.4 million to \$1.8 million is dispensed by the LHINs for either hospitals, community care access and other related activities. We have some PCOP money in there. We would have acquired brain injury programs; some money for assisted living and supportive housing perhaps. So it’s an amalgam of funds, but the bulk of those funds are at the discretion of the LHINs and dispensed by them.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** To the tune of \$1.4 million, I think you said.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes, \$1.4 million to \$1.8 million. I’m trying to remember actual—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. You will give me the exact numbers that go with—

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, very good.

My next question—I’m going back a little bit on home care—has to do with something that’s happening in the northeast. Right now, allied health professionals—physiotherapists, occupational therapists etc.—contract directly with the CCAC and they offer services in all sorts of little areas in the northeast. They have all been advised that the CCAC will not be renewing their contract. They want those people to basically be employees of existing service providers. They have put to them six rehabilitation service providers. Five of them are for-profit, one is a not-for-profit and none of them are in northern Ontario.

Physiotherapists are hard to find in my neck of the woods. Now they are being forced to contract with southern service providers so that they can have a contract with their CCAC—and guess what?—for less money. I’m not too happy with what’s going on. I was wondering if it was government policies that told our CCAC that they could not have direct contracts with health providers

or if this is something that my local CCAC has decided to do.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We’re not aware that this is something that has been directed from the ministry. I would be happy to get more information on this initiative by the CCAC in the northeast.

Are we talking about designated physiotherapy clinics?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No, no. It’s a physiotherapist who does work for CCAC. He does home care work for CCAC in—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And they’re individual, sole providers?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Correct.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We’d be more than happy to look into the details on that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. And you will let us know?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My next question has to do with hep C. We have the people who are pre-1986 and post-1990 who have been compensated for, the blood-tainted victims—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Tainted blood?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes—but the pre-1986 and post-1990s have not been compensated to the same amount as the 1986 to 1990 victims have. Is there any intention or work being done at the ministry level to equally compensate the pre-1986, post-1990 victims?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Perhaps you could just tell me, is this through Canadian Blood Services?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, it is. Well, what used to be Red Cross.

**Mr. Saâd Rafi:** I would have to consult with Canadian Blood Services as to what’s taking place there. Specifically in Ontario, of course, you’re talking about?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, yes, specifically—solely in Ontario, because the Ministry of Health has received funding and has compensated those victims. They just have not compensated equally to the ones who got compensated for 1986-90, who got a certain amount; pre-1986, post-1990 got a different amount.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We’ll look into that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. My next question has to do with the review of the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act, HARP as it’s better known. Which experts in radiation safety and relevant stakeholders will be involved in the review of this act? Any idea if this is coming anytime soon?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, in fact, it is. We are committed to reviewing the HARP Act.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Who will the stakeholders be who are chosen to work on this?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It’s not been determined yet, but it’s on our plan to take a look. There have certainly been many advocating that it does need a fresh look. Reza Moridi, MPP, is one of the strongest proponents for—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The review? Okay. If there's a way for people to let the ministry know that they are interested in taking part in this review or they are interested in giving input into this review, how would they go about doing that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** They could notify the ministry.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Directly?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My next one—they're all odd ones. Family Service Ontario has submitted to you a proposal called Walk-In Counselling Clinics: A Powerful Relief Valve for Pressure on Ontario's Health Care System. They have piloted a few walk-in clinics for counselling services. They have submitted their review and proposal to you, and I was wondering if your ministry is still interested in walk-in counselling clinics. If your ministry is still interested, when can we expect a response to their proposal?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This is a proposal I'm quite familiar with. Family Service Ontario was here at Queen's Park not too long ago advocating for that funding, and it's something that we're looking at.

I am impressed with the results that they've been able to demonstrate in those pilots. I can't make any commitment other than that we will look seriously at that request.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right. When I was talking about some of the transitional college councils, one group that is particularly unhappy is the naturopathic doctors, just to flag it. You've offered a briefing, so when I find out more, they are on my radar as one that is not happy with their relationship with the ministry.

1620

My other questions—I'm coming back to long-term care. On an annual basis, you change how much money people pay for a standard etc.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And this year, for the first time, you have brought in differential fees for older homes, to recognize, I guess, that older homes—is this something that you intend to pursue further as the difference between new homes and older homes—that get older and older—continues as the years go by?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You know that we are engaged in a process to redevelop all the older homes, 35,000—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, I am. They're like turtles getting in line.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** And we're hoping to accelerate the turtles, because there are some homes that are not attractive for people who want to go into long-term care, so as a result we have several hundred empty beds in homes that are just not appealing.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay, that will be the 10 minutes right to the dot. Liberals, final 10 minutes.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I thought it was over with the last group of questions. It has been a long, long day.

I know there have been a lot of negatives in the past, but you showed us there are so many positives from where we are with health care. Certainly, the one that—I waited a couple of years for a new knee back in 2003. I got it, I think, just after I became an MPP. It had nothing to do with it, but that two-and-a-half-year wait finally came up. To have gone from the worst in Canada to the first for wait times for many procedures—I think that should be said much more often.

It's like I talk about us getting out of coal in Ontario. It's so very important. It's the first government that I know of, at least, that's getting out of coal. It's so important, and it was done for health reasons.

I think that you deserve the time now to say what you want and not respond to questions, so if you would take the last seven or eight minutes on our behalf, I'd appreciate that, Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you. We really have made tremendous progress over the past nine years when it comes to health care. There are many ingredients to that success. Certainly, we have spent more money on health care, significantly more money, and that has allowed us to rebuild the foundation of our health care system: more people with family doctors; shorter wait times; significantly enhanced use of technology. There's a lot that is happening.

We know there's more to do and we will always be looking at what is the next thing that needs to be done. But I think taking the time every now and then to really acknowledge the progress that has been made is important. It's an opportunity for me to say thank you to all of the people in the ministry, throughout our whole health care system, who have worked very, very hard to drive the change that is positively impacting the delivery of health care in this province.

Change is difficult, but our extraordinary partners in health care have demonstrated that, given the right tools, we can make remarkable change together.

A very important part of the change we've been able to drive is our commitment to transparency. When you were waiting on that list for your knee replacement, nobody knew how long those wait times were. Every provider kept their own list, and there was no one who was actually monitoring how long those wait-lists were. We've gone from not even measuring, and everyone keeping their own list, to now publicly reporting. Anybody can go online and see what those wait times are, by hospital, for key procedures. I can't underline enough how important it is that transparency around information really can drive change.

Wait times: As I said earlier, we know we're meeting our targets on almost all of our surgical wait times. We know we still have challenges in some areas, some individual hospitals. There's always an explanation—you know, somebody retired and they didn't replace—there's a reason, but only when you see those numbers can you actually drive change.

I think the Excellent Care for All Act that was passed by our government—some people have described it as,



perhaps, the most important single piece of health care legislation since the introduction of universal health care because it turns the attention on quality. Hospital boards have big responsibilities. We entrust a lot to those hospital board members, but we've never given them the tools they need on the quality front. They've had responsibility on the financial side, and they take that responsibility seriously. Now they are taking the issue of quality seriously. Those hospital boards have identified their quality improvement initiatives. We've now tied executive compensation to the achievement of those quality improvement indicators.

When I talk about quality of care, sometimes people don't really know quite what that means, but it means getting patients the highest possible quality care. That means lower infection rates; that means fewer hospital readmissions; that means fewer medication errors. There are quality indicators that result in better patient care, and we need to manage quality; it can't be just a by-product that we just assume is there in our hospitals. When hospitals now can compare how they're doing on a range of safety indicators with how other hospitals are doing, that really does drive change.

We are so blessed in this province to have the doctors that we have, to have the nurses that we have. All of our health care providers, our personal support workers, our mental health workers, people who work in the cleaning staff in our hospitals—everybody wants to be part of providing excellent patient care. We're getting there. We're not there yet, but we are continually improving the quality of care, we're driving better value for money. Our hospitals: You heard earlier today that the vast majority of hospitals are now in a balanced budget or even a surplus, and all of our hospitals, if they're not in balance now, have a plan to get to balance. They're being fiscally responsible. They're improving outcomes for patients. But I am seeing those silos coming down in our health care system now. People are working together in a way that amazes even them.

I'm particularly excited about our seniors strategy. I was at a meeting with Dr. Sinha last week and brought together several providers in the Toronto Central LHIN, including EMS, including public health, including hospitals and home care—all of the providers in one room talking about, "How can we wrap care around an individual? How can we work better together as we move forward?"

There's excellent work that's happening out there. I'm inspired by the people who work in health care. It's a true honour for me to lead the Ministry of Health and to drive that change. I think that this is an important exercise that we go through every year. I think it's important that MPPs do their due diligence. You are holding me and my ministry to account, and that's an important job of elected representatives.

I want to say a particular thank you to France for raising issues that are thoughtful, that are focused, that demonstrate to me that you are interested in actually improving outcomes for patients. That has been the

attitude you've brought to your position as critic, and I'm grateful for that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, thank you.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We all have a role to play, regardless of what side of the House we sit on, in improving patient care. We all have constituency offices. We all meet with people in our ridings who are asking more of us, and I think it's our responsibility to deliver that more. We can't do it all at once, but we do need to do it in a step-by-step manner, where we are transparent about the outcomes, where we measure the results. We can't afford anymore to do things because we think they might help. We need to have demonstrated outcomes that come from our investments.

**1630**

I'm very excited about the action plan. It has received tremendous support. I know you were with me in Sudbury when I presented at a high level the elements of the action plan. People who work in health care say that we've hit the right elements to take the system to the next level. It's going to be a lot of work in implementing that. We've had an opportunity to talk about some of those elements today. We will continue to drive forward. It's an ambitious plan, but it's exactly what we need to do.

I'm excited about the future. I'm proud of the accomplishments to date. There are always bumps in the road. It's never perfect, but it is very, very good. The people we serve are getting better health care today than they were nine years ago—significantly better health care now than they were—because of the change that has been supported by the ministry but delivered by people on the front lines.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I thank you very much.

We have a point of order. Mr. Harris?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Chair, I'd like to introduce a motion.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You cannot.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Chair, I'd like to simply introduce a motion. The government and the minister already said that they would table documents, but I'd like to make it official and seek unanimous consent.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. If you wish unanimous consent, then anything can be done. Could you please read out what you want to do?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Sure. That the Standing Committee on Estimates—

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Mr. Chair, I think that we've had a long day. There has been nothing to inform us of this. I think—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** After he reads it, all you have—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** That the Standing Committee on Estimates—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Excuse me, the clerk has reminded me—and I'm sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself—that the estimates must come first. After the votes on estimates, you may seek unanimous consent for

what you wish. I will recognize you before we move on to the next ministry.

We're going to vote first, because the rules are that we must proceed immediately to the vote. We're going to hold the vote—there's a series of 12 votes to be held—and then I will recognize Mr. Harris. He requires unanimous consent. You can hear him out. You can either vote yes or no as you see fit.

We're going to proceed now to the votes. Just so that everyone has a pretty clear idea—yes, Mr. Harris?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd just like it to be—what is it?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** A recorded vote.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Sorry, a recorded vote on all 12.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** On all 12. Okay. Just for the ease of members, I think the easiest way to follow this is if you turn to 279 of your large book, if you have it with you. You don't need to have it—I will read it out anyway—but there is a series of 12 votes, and this helps to make it easier understanding how we go.

The first vote is on the ministry administration program, number 1401. Shall 1401 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**Nays**

Harris, Leone, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Vote 1402 is the health policy and research program. Shall 1402 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**Nays**

Harris, Leone, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Vote 1403 is the eHealth and information management program. Shall 1403 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**Nays**

Harris, Leone, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Vote 1405 is the Ontario health insurance program. Shall 1405 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Vote 1406 is the public health program. Shall 1406 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Vote 1407 is deferred because it's not on the first page, but it does come up later.

Vote 1411 is the local health integration networks and related health service providers. Shall 1411 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**Nays**

Harris, Leone, Nicholls.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Carried.

Vote 1412 is related to the provincial programs and stewardship. Shall 1412 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**Nays**

Harris.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Vote 1413 is the information systems. Shall 1413 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Vote 1414 is health promotion. Shall 1414 carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Back to 1407, which you will see for the first time recorded on page 281; it's the health capital program. Shall 1407 carry?



**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Shall the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care carry?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, McNeely.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

Shall I report the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to the House?

**Ayes**

Crack, Craitor, Dhillon, Gélinas, McNeely.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That carries.

That completes our consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

I now recognize Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm simply asking for unanimous consent to hear my motion that states that the Standing Committee on Estimates, herein "the committee," under standing order 110(b), stating that "each committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and things," directs the Minister of Health as well as the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to produce, no later than August 13, 2012, all documentation, electronic or otherwise, related to the evaluation of the Niagara ambulance communications pilot, including the full report in its unsevered, unredacted entirety.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Interjection:** No.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Unanimous consent not being forthcoming, I cannot entertain it.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Point of order, Mr. Chair: I would like to state also that this is information that the minister has agreed to provide the committee. We just want to isolate that and put it in a motion so that we can—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Crystallize it, as Minister Duncan would say.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** —crystallize it, so that we can actually have this information put forward on the committee. It seems to me that the Liberal members, particularly Mr. McNeely, Mr. Dhillon, Mr. Craitor and Mr. Crack, are somehow not aligning with their minister's wishes with respect to releasing this document—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, I don't think one can say that.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** It's not a point of order.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** First of all, it's not a point of order. It requires unanimous consent. The minister and the deputy minister have already stated many times that they will release this information. I think we

are obligated to take them on their word, and perhaps that was part of the rationale for the honourable members voting as they did, but I don't think you can question the motive for why they did what they did. The documents, I am assured, are forthcoming, and that has been stated here over and over.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Point of order?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** On a point of order.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Since my name was mentioned and in some unique way you've come to the conclusion that I'm opposed to this without me saying anything—and only because of that; otherwise I would not have said anything, but my name has been mentioned with these motives—I would have supported that. It's the Niagara region; I represent the Niagara region. I was there when we funded the creation of that new delivery model because the public demanded it from us. I don't have a problem with that.

The only reason I'm mentioning it is because I want to put into the record, with the greatest respect to Rob, that, no, I would have supported that. I see nothing wrong with releasing something like that to the public, particularly for the area that I represent.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** In any event, it required unanimous consent and unanimous consent was not forthcoming. I think the issue is finished.

Is there any other business before the committee before we go on to the ministry of francophone affairs?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I do, Mr. Chair. I would also like to seek unanimous consent to present the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Estimates, under standing order 110(b), stating that "each committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and things," directs the Minister of Health as well as the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to produce no later than August 29, 2012, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's House book, all correspondence, electronic or otherwise, related to Ornge sent or received by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's political and bureaucratic staff and staff in the Premier's office, and all correspondence, electronic or otherwise, sent or received by the minister's political staff related to eHealth Ontario between July 18, 2012, and July 23, 2012.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Point of order, Chair.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Wait until he's done.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** No.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Wait until he's done. Please continue.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I've finished.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay, he's finished. Mr. Dhillon, you have a point of order. I'm going to ask for unanimous consent. I have to ask for unanimous consent.

**Interjection:** No.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** First, I'm not sure what you're saying no to, so I have to ask the question. Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** No.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** There is not unanimous consent.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Why?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** They don't have to justify the reason. They do not have to justify.

Is there any other business before this committee on this ministry? Seeing none, that completes our consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. We thank the minister, the deputy and all those who have been here yesterday and all day today.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you very much.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** If the members wish a recess, you have to ask for it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Yes, I'd like to ask for a 15-minute recess.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** That's fair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** If there's a request for a 15-minute recess, then I'm going to tell the minister of francophone affairs that she ought not to remain because there will be—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So did we.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We finish at 5. Is it the desire of this committee that we take a 15-minute recess, which is, in effect, adjourning for the day?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'll withdraw that recess, then, if—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. We have a request to withdraw that—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Yes, if the minister has come from afar, we will gladly entertain what she has to say.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Crack is indicating he might be interested in a five-minute recess.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Or two, just so I can run.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Can we go while you run?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Crack is requesting a two- or three-minute recess. Is that—

**Interjection:** Yes.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** All right, we are recessed for two or three minutes. That will also afford the minister an opportunity to acquaint herself here in the room.

*The committee recessed from 1643 to 1649.*

## OFFICE DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES

### OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Bonjour. We'll wait for the clerk to be seated here.

We will proceed with consideration of the estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs, which was selected for a total of 7.5 hours of review.

The office is required to monitor the proceedings for any questions or issues that the office undertakes to address. I trust that the deputy minister has made arrangements to have the hearings closely monitored with

respect to questions raised so that the office can respond accordingly. If you wish, you may, at the end of your appearance, verify the questions and the issues being tracked by the research officers.

I now call vote 1301.

We will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minutes by the minister, followed by statements of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition and the third party. Then the minister will have up to 30 minutes for a reply. The remaining time, if any, will be apportioned equally among the three parties.

Madame la Ministre, vous avez maintenant huit minutes.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Huit minutes?

**Le Président (M. Michael Prue):** Oui, huit minutes.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Très bien.

**Le Président (M. Michael Prue):** Et demain matin, 22 minutes.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Okay. Merci beaucoup.

Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, je tiens d'abord à vous remercier tous pour votre intérêt envers les affaires francophones. I know that it's not easy to travel in the middle of the summer, and your presence here today clearly reflects your ongoing commitment.

Le travail du comité est important, non seulement pour informer l'Assemblée législative sur les affaires francophones, mais aussi pour rassurer les citoyens de l'Ontario quant à la bonne gestion financière de leur gouvernement. I therefore appreciate your participation in this committee.

À ma connaissance, c'est la première fois depuis 2003 que le comité sur les crédits budgétaires se penche sur le budget de ce petit « ministère », si on peut l'appeler, que l'on nomme l'Office des affaires francophones.

Cette attention que vous portez envers l'Office des affaires francophones est salutaire, car elle me permet de mettre en relief ce que l'Office a accompli avec moi et les membres de mon équipe au cours de mes trois mandats comme ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones et ce, avec un financement relativement restreint.

I am confident that my presentation will confirm that the Ontario government can achieve great things and contribute to the development of Ontario's francophone community while relying on a very small budget.

Pour bien mettre l'Office des affaires francophones en contexte, permettez-moi d'abord de faire un clin d'oeil à nos prédécesseurs libéraux, conservateurs et néo-démocrates, qui ont adopté la Loi sur les services en français à l'unanimité en 1986.

Vous le savez comme moi, l'unanimité est chose rare à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. L'unanimité est surtout gage de leadership, de vision commune et de confiance, et d'espoir en une communauté bien enracinée ici depuis plus de 400 ans, la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

Today, as a result of this type of synergy, I can pay tribute to the vision of Ontario's three main political parties as well as their courage and determination. All together, we ensure that Ontario is a society open to the



world, a society that embraces tolerance through cultural diversity and one where a dynamic francophone community forms an integral part of social, economic, political and cultural development.

Chers collègues, l'exercice d'examen des crédits budgétaires requiert de la rigueur, et je sais que le comité prend ce travail très au sérieux. Mais cet exercice requiert plus qu'une rigueur comptable. Selon moi, il doit également s'effectuer en considérant l'importance globale et le développement durable de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

Avec un budget annuel restreint, l'Office y contribue de façon significative en adoptant une approche systémique visant à maximiser l'impact de ses actions dans le cadre de son rôle central au sein du gouvernement. En d'autres mots, nous examinons aujourd'hui ensemble les dépenses de l'Office des affaires francophones dans le contexte du renouvellement des services gouvernementaux entamé depuis 2003, conformément aux besoins des citoyens francophones et francophiles de l'Ontario et conformément à la mission de l'Office des affaires francophones de mettre l'accent sur l'avenir des francophones de la province.

Eight years ago, the government wanted to reinvigorate the French community in Ontario. Despite the very limited financial resources available, we all proceeded to enthusiastically promote Ontario's French community in order to recognize its rich heritage, as well as its ongoing contribution to the prosperity of the province.

C'est là qu'on retrouve la genèse du nouveau budget de l'Office qui, au cours des dernières années, a progressivement et, en fait, très légèrement augmenté pour s'établir à un peu plus de 5,1 millions de dollars en 2012-2013.

Et dès le départ, ce nouvel élan et cette nouvelle ère pour les francophones ont reposé sur une vision cohérente et stratégique dont les objectifs étaient, et continuent d'être, transformateurs et structurants. Autrement dit, nous suivons un plan intégré visant à transformer les services en français, à bonifier les programmes offerts aux francophones et à doter la francophonie ontarienne des outils favorisant sa prise en charge individuelle et collective.

The Office of Francophone Affairs works with the ministries on an ongoing basis in order to help them ensure and improve the delivery of French-language services. For this reason, it is important to make a distinction between the budgets of ministries responsible for the delivery of French-language services and the budget of the Office of Francophone Affairs.

Près de la moitié du budget annuel de l'Office des affaires francophones de 5,1 millions de dollars pour l'exercice financier 2012-2013 est en fait consacrée aux salaires et bénéfices des employés. Ce budget comprend aussi celui du Commissariat aux services en français, de l'ordre de 869 000 \$ en 2012-2013, et celui de l'entente Canada-Ontario de 1,4 million de dollars redistribués aux ministères, ce qui met en évidence le peu de ressources financières dont dispose l'Office des affaires franco-

phones pour élaborer ses propres programmes et initiatives. De plus, près de 400 000 \$ sont dépensés chaque année pour les frais fixes, qui comprennent, entre autres, le loyer et l'équipement informatique.

Today, the team of the Office of Francophone Affairs is comprised of 20 employees: one assistant deputy minister; two directors, each responsible for policies and communication; four administrative employees; three employees in the communications branch; and 10 employees in the policy branch.

For its part, the team at the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner, whose budget is included in the budget of the Office of Francophone Affairs, is comprised of six individuals, including the commissioner. I am sure you will agree with me when I say that this is a small team that accomplishes a lot.

Il s'agit toutefois d'une équipe efficace, un groupe dévoué et un petit ministère fier d'oeuvrer à la jonction même de l'axe de collaboration entre le gouvernement de l'Ontario, la société civile francophone et le milieu d'affaires francophones dans notre province.

I would like to take this opportunity to add that the modus operandi of the Office of Francophone Affairs could serve as a model at a time when the government is facing major budget deficits and is looking for ways to maximize the use of its resources.

Grâce à l'Office, nous appliquons la lettre et l'esprit de la Loi sur les services en français afin de continuer à outiller les employés du gouvernement de l'Ontario afin de les amener à offrir activement les services en français dans 25 régions désignées, selon les termes de la Loi.

Je suis très heureuse de vous rappeler aujourd'hui qu'il existe maintenant 25 régions désignées pour les services en français, dont les désignations plus récentes de Brampton et Kingston, et que d'autres désignations sont présentement à l'étude. Au cours des dernières années, l'Office a également été maître d'oeuvre de la désignation de 225 agences gouvernementales et organismes de l'Ontario. Ces agences et organismes, qui sont maintenant assujettis à la Loi, ont volontairement confirmé leur engagement envers la communauté francophone et l'offre de services en français, et ce nombre continue d'augmenter.

Dear colleagues, the consensus of the three political parties in 1986 has therefore served as the launch pad for the designation of all these regions and all these agencies. I am sure you will agree with me that the clear results obtained in 2012 have validated the vision that our three political parties developed over 25 years ago.

Et, vous le savez, le processus de désignation géré par l'Office des affaires francophones est rigoureux, respecté et surtout structurant. L'Office se soucie toujours de la capacité des ministères à offrir les services en français. Son approche ne consiste pas à faire la police, mais plutôt à nourrir la collaboration et servir d'appui continu.

In keeping with this approach, the Office of Francophone Affairs worked very closely with ministries and agencies to develop and ensure the adoption of a directive on French-language communications, which

would ensure that the specific needs of francophones are considered in the context of all communications strategies during the strategic planning process which precedes the implementation of any communication campaign.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Madam Minister, are you nearly finished or is it going to be more than—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No, I am not. Is it the end?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** It now being 5 o'clock, I'm afraid we must adjourn for the day. We look forward to your reappearance tomorrow.

Any other business before we adjourn for the day?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** What time tomorrow?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** It's 8 till 5, with a half-hour for lunch.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** We won't be here till 5?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Yes, I think we will.

We stand adjourned until tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock.

*The committee adjourned at 1701.*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 24 July 2012

## Standing Committee on Estimates

Office of Francophone Affairs



# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 24 juillet 2012

## Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Office des affaires francophones



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 24 July 2012

Mardi 24 juillet 2012

*The committee met at 0802 in room 151.*OFFICE DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES  
OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Good morning, committee members. We will call the Standing Committee on Estimates to order.

Il me donne plaisir d'accueillir la ministre, M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur, pour présenter. Nous avons sept heures et 20 minutes qui restent. Donc, Madame, si vous voulez continuez avec votre présentation.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Merci beaucoup. Hier, j'ai oublié de présenter les deux personnes qui m'accompagnent : Daniel Cayen, qui est le sous-ministre adjoint aux Affaires francophones, et Paul Genest, qui est le sous-ministre aux Affaires francophones.

Alors, je continue.

Sous le leadership de l'Office des affaires francophones, cette directive novatrice a été développée grâce aux efforts communs de plusieurs groupes de travail. Elle démontre bien le rôle central et catalyseur qu'est appelé à jouer l'Office et rappelle que les actions et initiatives de l'Office des affaires francophones ont une portée globale et positive sur le gouvernement.

It is important to highlight one other initiative of the Office of Francophone Affairs. In 2007, the Office of Francophone Affairs developed a new framework for performance measures regarding the provision of French-language services for the Ontario public service.

Pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'Ontario, les ministères doivent produire des rapports annuels portant sur leur rendement en ce qui a trait aux services en français. Le gouvernement a donc maintenant les outils nécessaires pour mesurer le rendement des ministères dans leur capacité d'offrir des services en français.

Dans un cadre plus global et d'une action concertée, l'Office des affaires francophones a aussi travaillé de près avec les instances publiques et civiles pour créer le nouveau Commissariat aux services en français.

The creation of the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner is one of my greatest accomplishments as minister responsible for francophone affairs, and I must thank you for the support you have given me with respect to implementing this new office.

As we have seen in the commissioner's reports published over the past few years, the results achieved by his

team have exceeded all expectations and were accomplished with an annual budget of just \$869,000 in 2012-13. This amount is included in the overall budget for the Office of Francophone Affairs.

Comme vous, je suis très fière du travail du commissaire et de son équipe dévouée de cinq personnes, qui a déjà produit cinq rapports annuels, un rapport spécial et plusieurs rapports d'enquête qui comprennent des recommandations importantes qui nous ont permis et continueront de nous aider à mieux servir les francophones de l'Ontario.

Au cours des dernières années, le Commissariat aux services en français a élaboré des recommandations qui ont amené un ensemble de ministères clé à améliorer leurs prestations des services en français et à revoir certains de leurs mécanismes de fonctionnement.

Le Commissariat aux services en français a notamment fait des recommandations dans les secteurs de la santé, de l'éducation, de la justice, des affaires civiles et de l'immigration, et des communications du gouvernement.

Comme moi, vous ne pouvez que constater à quel point la portée de ses actions a été vaste et a généré un retour sur l'investissement des plus profitables.

Vous conviendrez que, dans une perspective budgétaire, les résultats de toutes ces mesures transformatrices à l'Office des affaires francophones témoignent d'un rendement exceptionnel pour un si petit ministère.

Obviously, if we are serious about wanting to create long-lasting changes in our society, we need to work with youth.

I must also point out that the Office of Francophone Affairs serves as an expert adviser to the education sector on an ongoing basis. Although its contribution in this area is not financial, the office provides guidance due to its in-depth knowledge of Ontario's francophone community.

Depuis 2003, le gouvernement a investi 562 millions de dollars dans l'éducation en langue française, aux paliers élémentaire et secondaire. Vous le savez, les résultats des élèves francophones sont plus que probants, et les écoles françaises ont fait un rattrapage exceptionnel depuis 2003. Aujourd'hui, en 2012, les écoles françaises de l'Ontario se distinguent au même titre que les écoles anglaises, et le taux de graduation y est comparable.

Monsieur le Président, comme le disent tant de personnes, l'argent n'a pas de couleur ni de langue.



French graduates in Ontario provide a major contribution to Ontario's vitality and economic growth, and, like all of you, I am very proud of this.

L'Ontario est riche, prospère et accueillant parce que l'Ontario favorise l'épanouissement de ses minorités culturelles dans le plein respect de ce qui nous unit et de ce qui nous différencie.

La province de Ontario est devenue ce qu'elle est parce qu'elle s'intéresse au bien-être de ses citoyens, bien sûr, mais elle s'intéresse également aux enjeux nationaux et internationaux. C'est ce qui fait que nous soyons perçus de manière si favorable au Canada et partout dans le monde.

Ce constat est également vrai pour les affaires francophones. Les occasions pour bien positionner l'Ontario à l'intérieur du Canada et sur la scène mondiale n'ont pas échappé à l'Office des affaires francophones.

Parlons d'abord du Canada.

Under the terms of the government of Canada's roadmap for official languages, Ontario signed an agreement with the federal government in order to advance and promote our linguistic minority.

The Canada-Ontario agreement concerning French-language services is a joint funding agreement intended to finance French-language initiatives which are not covered by ordinary provincial expenditures.

Selon les termes de l'entente, les fonds fédéraux doivent être au moins égaux par la contribution provinciale des ministères, et l'Office des affaires francophones est responsable de la gestion et la coordination des transferts de fonds, ainsi que de l'élaboration des rapports pour le compte du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

Cette enveloppe a été établie pour un montant de 1,4 million de dollars par an au cours des huit dernières années.

Last year, with a provincial contribution of close to \$1.8 million, 34 projects received funding to develop new resources and initiatives. The objectives of these projects ranged from producing multimedia content to promoting Ontario's parks on the francophone market and raising awareness among francophone students about careers available in the fields of social services and health care.

L'entente actuelle viendra à échéance en mars 2013. Dans les négociations précédentes, l'Ontario a mis l'accent sur la juste part de l'enveloppe de financement fédéral pour les francophones de la province et j'ai la ferme intention de poursuivre dans la même veine. Après tout, l'Ontario compte la plus importante minorité francophone au Canada, et j'espère bien compter sur l'appui unanime des trois partis politiques pour convaincre le gouvernement du Canada du bien-fondé de nos demandes.

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Ontario is also a full member of the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, whose goal is to provide a national forum to promote French language and culture. En fait, l'Ontario est depuis toujours un chef de file au sein de la Conférence, qui a été créée en 1994.

La cotisation annuelle de 30 000 \$ permet à l'Office des affaires francophones de faire un investissement qui procure une fenêtre d'influence inestimable et génère une visibilité importante sur la scène nationale.

As part of the Canadian delegation, Ontario is assured of a strategic presence at the sommet international de la Francophonie and, as such, is an important international player. As a result, Ontario is in a position to capitalize on this summit in order to promote the province's bilingualism, highlight business opportunities and share best practices.

On doit se rappeler que le rôle de l'Office des affaires francophones est d'aider le gouvernement à respecter ses obligations sous la Loi sur les services en français, ainsi que ses engagements envers la communauté francophone.

Developing statistical profiles on the francophone community is vital to the office's ability to make recommendations on policies and programs.

L'Office des affaires francophones a produit un profil général et quatre nouveaux rapports sur les minorités visibles, les jeunes, les femmes et les personnes âgées, qui seront publiés d'ici la fin de l'année.

Bien que ces activités soient normales et justifiées pour l'Office des affaires francophones, des économies ont été identifiées à travers l'achat conjoint de données avec la Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario, l'élimination des dépenses d'imprimerie depuis 2009 et le partage des coûts de publication du profil général.

Statistics help the government make informed choices in identifying priorities for public services, and this is particularly true at this time of public spending cuts.

Je veux maintenant vous parler de la nouvelle politique du gouvernement de l'Ontario sur les tierces parties, articulée par l'Office des affaires francophones.

Depuis l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français il y a plus de 25 ans, les tiers sont de plus en plus appelés par la province à offrir des services à la population en son nom. Ceci touche, par exemple, les services offerts par l'entremise d'Emploi Ontario, les examens permettant d'obtenir un permis de conduire dans les centres Test au Volant, ainsi que la prestation de services sociaux par des organismes de paiement de transfert.

Selon moi, il était temps d'intégrer cette nouvelle réalité de manière formelle et systématique, tout en réitérant les exigences auxquelles sont tenus les organismes gouvernementaux en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français.

This regulation ensures that government agencies which use third parties to deliver services on their behalf also comply with the French Language Services Act.

Il ne crée pas de nouvelles exigences, mais établit une échéance précise aux organismes gouvernementaux qui offrent des services au nom du gouvernement pour se conformer à la Loi sur les services en français.

Vous en conviendrez : ce règlement a un fondement économique simple et solide qui nous aide à poursuivre le renouvellement de l'Ontario.

With limited resources, the Office of Francophone Affairs also does its best to promote the social and economic development of francophones.

Comme vous le savez, l'Office des affaires francophones ne possède pas de fonds de développement pour les organismes.

Néanmoins, afin de contribuer au dynamisme de la communauté franco-ontarienne, l'Office consacre une faible proportion de son budget à des partenariats avec les organismes de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Ces partenariats doivent répondre à des axes d'intervention prioritaires précis que l'Office a adoptés en 2008 et qui visent la promotion des services en français tant sur la scène provinciale que régionale, la promotion de la culture franco-ontarienne et le renforcement de la francophonie canadienne et du rôle de chef de file de l'Office.

Again, relatively speaking, the projects do not require high levels of funding, but the return on investment is significant for the francophone community and the entire province. More often than not, the projects involve symbolic amounts which still help organizations and associations to implement activities which are of great value to Ontario's francophone community.

Par exemple, l'Office des affaires francophones offre un soutien à la Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, la FESFO, pour la tenue des Jeux franco-ontariens, et à l'association des professionnels de la musique et du spectacle, l'APCM, pour l'organisation de son gala biennal au cours duquel sont honorés des artistes franco-ontariens et franco-ontariennes. D'autres organismes ou événements tels que la Fédération des aînés et des retraités franco-ontariens, la FAFO; Cinéfranco; la Fondation franco-ontarienne; l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario, l'AJEFO; l'Association de la presse francophone, l'APF; et le Salon du livre du Grand Sudbury bénéficient de la contribution de l'Office des affaires francophones.

In talking about the fundamentals of our social and community structures, we must also talk about access to French-language services in the judicial system. As the new Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I am particularly aware of the significance of this challenge, which was also raised by the French Language Services Commissioner.

Les ministères en charge de la justice provinciale travaillent fort afin d'assurer que les droits des francophones soient respectés. Ce travail de fond se fait en collaboration avec l'Office des affaires francophones.

Toutefois, il reste des lacunes à combler. Je suis certaine que le travail fait par le Comité du barreau et de la magistrature nous aidera à combler ces lacunes, et je reste déterminée à poursuivre les objectifs fixés lors de la création de ce comité.

Vous le savez comme moi, il n'y a pas de solution rapide à ce problème. Cependant, nous allons continuer à travailler ensemble pour atteindre nos objectifs.

Dear colleagues, the small team at the Office of Francophone Affairs could not have accomplished all these tasks and experienced all these successes without

the support and assistance of the Franco-Ontarian community.

Comme ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, j'ai le plaisir de recevoir le conseil expert du personnel de l'Office, bien sûr, mais également d'un comité consultatif provincial sur les affaires francophones composé de citoyens et de citoyennes de la province dont l'engagement entièrement bénévole est plus que profitable. Le comité représente une pratique exemplaire d'engagement communautaire.

D'ailleurs, d'autres ministères, tels que le ministère de l'Éducation et le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, ont adopté une approche similaire.

An advisory committee reminds us of our mission of serving as representatives of the people and keeps us mindful of the fairness which we should always demonstrate for all regions of the province.

I think that my time has expired. I still have—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Three and a half minutes.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I still have three and a half minutes? Okay, thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, my presentation has listed some of the services provided by the Office of Francophone Affairs as well as the scope of projects that the Office of Francophone Affairs manages alone or with its partners.

La liste est longue, malgré le budget de 5,1 millions de dollars qu'on accorde annuellement à l'Office.

**0820**

J'aimerais conclure en vous parlant de trois événements qui viennent couronner le succès de la Loi sur les services en français et rappeler la détermination et l'engagement des francophones de l'Ontario.

Je pense d'abord au Prix de la francophonie qui a été créé en 2006 pour souligner les réalisations des citoyens qui ont contribué au renforcement de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

Every two years, Ontario honours francophones and francophiles as well as young francophones, who have distinguished themselves.

Moreover, in the spirit of co-operation between the Office of Francophone Affairs and the francophone community, the promising celebrations for the 400th anniversary of the francophone presence in Ontario are taking shape for 2015. Planning for these events has started. Not only will they give us an opportunity to celebrate, but they will also serve as major tourist attractions, in addition to being a high point in the journey of francophone people in America.

Au cours des prochains mois, l'Office des affaires francophones va poursuivre sa consultation des organismes et groupes communautaires, ainsi que des municipalités concernées, afin de donner forme aux célébrations qui devraient se tenir partout dans la province. Il y aura des consultations menant au développement d'un plan étoffé dans les mois prochains. La province envisage que les commémorations officielles du 400<sup>e</sup> aient lieu au cours de l'été 2015, débutant possiblement tout juste après les Jeux panaméricains à Toronto.



The third event is, of course, Franco-Ontarian Day, which has been celebrated on September 25 every year since the adoption of the act in 2010. I am very proud of this recent accomplishment. Like the French Language Services Act, the Franco-Ontarian Day Act was unanimously adopted by Ontario's Legislative Assembly. Twenty-five years later, all the political parties again demonstrated a common interest in the development of Ontario's francophone community.

L'Office des affaires francophones est un petit ministère qui réussit, année après année, au-delà de ses moyens, à contribuer au développement des services en français et au rayonnement de la francophonie ontarienne. Je suis fière de tout ce qui a été accompli depuis 2003.

I will now be happy to answer questions or to hear your comments on the budget estimates provided for the current fiscal year.

Merci, monsieur le Président. Merci à vous tous.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame.

We'll move to the official opposition.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Merci, monsieur le Président.

Je dois dire d'abord que le français est ma troisième langue, et puis ce n'est pas très facile pour moi de faire une communication en français. Mais nous avons une communauté franco-ontarienne à Cambridge; ce n'est pas grande, mais c'est là. Nous avons un centre francophone et nous avons aussi une école secondaire francophone, Père-René-de-Galinée. Je pense que c'est la seule école secondaire francophone dans la région de Waterloo.

Earlier in the session, I met with members of our Waterloo region francophone association to listen to their concerns. I believe my colleague Mr. Harris also met with them. We're certainly interested to have the opportunity to raise some of the issues, concerns and comments that they have brought forward with us here. We often don't get the opportunity to raise certain constituent concerns, so this forum is going to provide us with that opportunity to address some of those concerns. We're looking forward to that, Minister, to having those discussions with you today.

It always amazes me how communities form. We don't have a very large French-speaking Franco-Ontarian community, as I mentioned, in the riding of Cambridge and the region of Waterloo, but it is there. Certainly, when we were discussing with this association of francophone people—I had a discussion about how they settled here. There were basically three reasons why they did so. They were either in southern Ontario through marriage—certainly that's one reason why people relocate to a different area. There is a little bit of immigration from French-speaking people also to southern Ontario. But the biggest reason that they highlighted for me, I think, was dealing with work, and not just work because of the promise of good jobs, but work because of their factory, perhaps, or their plant closing in Quebec. They moved to southern Ontario because that's where their company was offering a new job.

It's interesting just to see some of the history of our communities in our area and our region. I think that story resonates pretty well with a lot of small pockets of French-speaking people in southern Ontario, which is probably a different history than perhaps Franco-Ontarian people in eastern Ontario and northeastern Ontario, certainly the area that's more closely aligned territorially and geographically with the province of Quebec. Their issues are different in some respects because of that and because their numbers aren't as large as in other parts of the province. But they do have issues and they do have concerns and certainly we're interested in raising those concerns today in estimates.

I also want, before I get into some of the questions that we have for the ministry, to highlight the fact that we just finished in estimates with the Ministry of Health, which is the largest ministry, at \$47 billion in operating expenditures, to probably one of the smallest, which is francophone affairs, with operating expenses of just over \$5 million. I see in the estimates the only other expenditure smaller than that is the Office of the Premier at \$2.6 million and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

It's very interesting to see that we're going from mega-ministry to mini-ministry in some respects. I think if you just look at the differences here, we have the Ministry of Health's results-based planning briefing books, which are quite voluminous, to the results-based planning briefing for francophone affairs. I find that contrast very interesting and amusing, as large as that is.

I'm not sure, frankly—since this is the Liberal members of this committee's choice—what exactly they're planning to uncover. I know we in estimates chose a couple of ministries. We chose energy and we chose the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, because they tend to be hot-button issues for ourselves and for our party. I know the NDP chose, I believe, infrastructure, northern development and mines, certainly with the Northland train issue and the Ring of Fire, two issues that are important to that ministry. Infrastructure is a ministry in some respects like francophone affairs, that spans many other ministries in terms of what they do. They also chose health and finance—again, hot-button issues for their party.

I'm very interested and curious to see what exactly the members of the committee from the Liberal side intend to uncover and unlock by choosing their hot-button issue of francophone affairs. We're waiting to hear those piercing questions that certainly will have a lot to—I'm interested to hear what you're planning to uncover with a ministry whose binder not very deep. Again, my colleague, Mr. Harris, is there.

I'm wondering about some of the reasons for that. I know that there certainly must be hot-button issues that the government plans to push, perhaps in education or economic development, innovation or community safety and correctional services or citizenship and immigration, children and youth services—ministries that often have a lot more numbers attached to them and probably their

briefing binders are a little thicker for us to ask some of these piercing questions.

I'm quite curious to see what we're going to see from our members of this committee from the opposite side—exactly what they intend to unlock. I know, certainly, when we talked about energy on our side of the equation we were interested in learning more about the Mississauga gas plants; we also had some green energy questions that we asked. We moved forward from our scrutiny on the basis of coming up with some information. I guess the objective of this committee is to scrutinize government. Certainly, we chose energy for the reason that we have and had a series of objectives.

**0830**

Again, I'm quite curious to see exactly what we're going to find from the folks on the other side. I think, as the minister states, it's an important ministry, particularly because it provides an avenue for French-speaking people in the province of Ontario to have access to government services in their language, particularly in the regions where they've been designated to have that provision. Certainly, there are issues, I know, that I've encountered in my short time as being an MPP where that is true. Again, I'm quite curious to see exactly what gauntlet you're going to throw this minister on a \$5-million ministry. I just really don't have a quite clear sense yet about what that's going to be.

I think, certainly from our party's perspective, we see a lot of value in the work that the ministry is doing, certainly for French-speaking people in the province of Ontario. We obviously support the objective, clearly, being in a country like Canada that has official bilingualism. We support that, certainly through the work that your ministry is doing, Minister, and I think that's important to get a sense of exactly where we're going with all that.

But \$5 million, in the grand scheme of things, in a \$107-billion budget—and we're spending seven and a half hours in estimates on this, for \$5 million. I'm quite curious how we're going to fill that time, given the scope of things.

Some of the things that we've encountered—and certainly, Minister, I hope we're going to have some discussions about this going forward. I know that there's a petition that has been circulating by the association in Waterloo region of French-speaking people who were looking for a designated service area. I am curious to know, Minister, how much that is going to cost, given the size and scope of your ministry. That's a question that I'm going to—maybe I'll ask that question now and see if we have an opportunity to get that.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** So are you going to ask that question? It is the question?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It is a question, if you have an answer.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** How much the designation of that region will cost?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** We know in key strategy 1, on your—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** This is the results-based plan, 2011-12.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Where's this from?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** This is from—it's basically this document, last year.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'll say this: The designation does not cost more money to the government. What was the practice in Ontario for many years was an unwritten practice or process whereby a region needed to have 10% of its population or a town, 5,000 people, to be able to ask for the designation.

Since I became the minister of francophone affairs, I've changed a bit of the rules, and I will give you the example of Kingston, for instance. In Kingston, the population there didn't meet this criteria, but there was a wish from the community there, and they approached their politicians—the mayor, the MPP and the MP—and the three of them were in agreement that Kingston should be designated.

What we do when a designation is requested like this is we do a consultation with all the ministries that are represented in that region to see if they are able to provide the service in French, and if not, how long it will take for them, because we don't fire anyone. What they do use: It's when a position becomes open. Then they post the position for someone bilingual. I say, it doesn't cost more money to pay someone who is unilingual or to pay someone who is bilingual.

The second area where we used to have concerns brought about by the ministry was transportation, because transportation signage has to be bilingual. I was told by them that every two years they change the signage. When you change it, put it bilingual. So it does not cost more money. They do it every two years. That's the way we go about it. It does not cost more money to the province to designate the region under the legislation, and the government of Ontario in that region has to offer services in both English and French.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** One of the things that was raised to me—and perhaps I can get some clarification from you. One of the circumstances that the members of this committee who came to visit me expressed was not solely with relation to services, perhaps, that the Ontario public service provides, but also other services. For example, when someone goes to see their family doctor and their family doctor does not speak French, what provisions might there be? What they do in those circumstances today is that they actually go with a family member or friend that is English-speaking who can provide a translation for them. It sort of seemed to me, when I was having this discussion, that they were looking for or they believed, at least, that this designation that would be applied to the region would account for those kinds of services that aren't directly rendered by the Ontario public service but at the end of the day are public services, because obviously health is a public service, education is a public service, public transit is a public service and so on and so forth.



Perhaps could you explain exactly what this designation would cover with relation to that, because the concern that I had was exactly, how is the family doctor going to cope with either having to bring his or her French up to speed or bringing in a translator to have this? That, to me, would say there is a cost associated with designating an area to that.

Perhaps you can explain for members of my community who are raising this issue to me what exactly the designation does provide.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The designation applies only to the provincial government. The private sector, like the office of your doctor, it does not apply to them. It does not apply to municipalities. But it does apply to organizations that offer services on behalf of the government, which otherwise the government would have to offer that service.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Can you give some examples of that?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Some examples: We have to provide the car licences. We contract this with the private sector. The private sector has to offer the service in French in designated areas. That is one example.

**0840**

Health is not—the office of the Ministry of Health in that region has to offer service in French.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** But not the hospital.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** But not the hospital, not the doctor. The hospital, though, can ask to be designated.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** And what is that? What does that—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, they have to offer the service. Often, it's not all the services in the hospital, but let's say that they have the capacity in that hospital to offer emergency services. First of all, they have to offer the service before they ask for the designation. There is a review to make sure that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they can offer in the emergency in Cambridge—they can offer the service in French. Then they can ask to have the emergency department of the Cambridge hospital designated.

What we do, though, to help in these situations—first of all, there are two ways. We have an information system whereby doctors can post their—what is the name of the organization? Urgence Ontario? It's a website anyway, and they can post their name, saying, "I can take more patients, and here are the languages that I'm speaking." The person in Cambridge could look at this website and then call in this doctor and become the patient of this doctor.

We also have what we initiated a couple of years ago. I'm answering a question, though, that is not really from my purview, but more the Ministry of Health. But since I'm very involved—we have now the *Entités de planification des services de santé en français*. The region is divided in six areas and they have the LHIN, the local health integration network. They help them to develop a health plan for that region. So they work with the LHIN. They help in the planification in that area—what the

francophone community needs in health services. But that does not mean that the health institution in that area has to offer French services, even if the region is designated.

The school system is different. It's a constitutional right, so it does apply everywhere in Ontario. The region does not need to be designated. That's why we have our French schools and French high schools, but this right does not go further than high school.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** In this document, the Ontario government's published results-based plans for 2011-12 and annual reports for 2010 and 2011, it suggests that the ministry is leading in the analysis of three requests of designation under the FLSA for Niagara, Durham and Waterloo. I'm most interested in Waterloo. Can you provide us with the status of that analysis? You mentioned that you would consult with local elected officials and interested officials. Could you give us some indication of what those discussions were about?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes. There is a request for designation in the regions of Niagara, Durham and Waterloo. What we do is, the Office of Francophone Affairs will review, or have reviewed, these three latest requests, and they are keeping me abreast of the progress.

The traditional approach, like I said, has been to designate areas where francophone populations exceed 5,000 people in an urban area or represent 10% of the area's total population, but with the amalgamation of municipalities, this became more difficult. We look at stats every year from Stats Canada and so far, there is no other region that could ask for the designation under these two criteria. That's why we opened a third way to do it, which is that when the politicians—the MPP, the MP, the mayor—are in agreement, they send us a letter of approval. But I'm not the one who goes and asks for these letters; the francophone community has to do it.

Then after we review, the same process will apply. We look at the region out there to see if it's possible for our ministries that are located in Waterloo, Durham or Niagara to offer the service, and, if not, how long it will take. If they say, "We have no people who will retire for the next 10 years," we know that it's not possible. They can come back later and request it again. That's the process that we have been following.

The Office of Francophone Affairs works closely with the francophone community out there, helps them, gives them advice, but on the ground, the francophone community will do the work.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** When you classify an urban area, are you talking about the geographic of the municipality, like the region of Waterloo? Or is it the census metropolitan areas from Stats Canada that you analyze? What are the criteria to get to that 5,000-people threshold?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** For this, very specific, I'll turn it to Daniel, I think.

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** It would be more the metropolitan areas that we would look at. So if you have a region like in Durham, where there are several towns within Durham, the 5,000 would have to be reached in a particular

town, like Oshawa or Whitby-Ajax, that type of thing. It would not be a total population for the whole region that is necessarily requesting the designation.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So it would be the StatsCan definition of CMAs?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Yes. In your region, it would be either Cambridge that would have to have 5,000, or Kitchener, or Waterloo, but not a total for the whole region of Kitchener-Waterloo/Cambridge.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** You're suggesting it's not by riding but by—

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** That's right.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** And would Guelph be included in that?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Would Guelph be included? Is Guelph part of our CMA?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Guelph was not in the request for a designation. It was not included in the request that came from the region.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. And if that were—I'm just thinking out loud here. The reason why I'm asking whether Guelph is, is because the French high school that I mentioned earlier is on the northern part of my riding, and we have a lot of students from Guelph that actually attend that school. So I was wondering if that would be part—if it wasn't part of the request, it wasn't part of the request. But could it be part of the request—

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** As the minister mentioned, the local community would decide what would be part of the request and would come to us. We would not dictate to them or guide them in terms of suggesting what the boundaries of the request should be.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. So you're in a position just to judge, not to sort of strategize.

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Right.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Just a quick question: This year, in your 2012-13 results-based plan briefing book—"Key strategy 1: Modernizing French-language services."

It says: "Modernize the analytical framework for reviewing requests...." Are you implementing a series of new tools to analyze such requests? That's for the deputy or—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, I will turn it to—

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Certainly. Thank you for the question. As Minister Meilleur mentioned, in the case of Kingston, they were not quite at the 5%. It was four point something or other, and community support was a critical element. Kingston set a precedent, and there was clearly very strong support that was indicated.

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Understandably, francophone groups in other parts of the province said, "This is something we'd like to see," and have gotten organized and brought forward these other requests. So in terms of what revision we've made, it's gauging community support. What they've been doing is reaching out to MPPs such as yourself. Certainly, it's the provincial government that is implicated in a decision to make a designation, so I think it's your role, if

I may, that is the most important here in terms of indicating that community support. But in Kingston, the mayor was supportive; the federal MP was also supportive. At the end of the day, it's a judgement call made by the government that there is significant community support.

As the minister was saying, it's not something that the government sought to impose on an area, but rather to be in a position of responsiveness.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Are you suggesting that it's got to be about a 5% threshold in order for it to be considered?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Formerly, that was the formal criteria.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But Kingston was below that, therefore—

**Mr. Paul Genest:** That's correct—not by a lot, but they were. So by those formal criteria, they didn't clear that bar, but ultimately it was decided there was a significant population and significant community support.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So I would assume that Niagara, Durham and Waterloo would have met the threshold of at least 5%.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** They in fact do not quite meet that threshold.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No, they do not.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** They do not. But in all three cases, it's a growing population. In southern Ontario, thanks to immigration of francophones, frankly, populations of francophones are growing. That's an indicator as well.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Is that analysis public? Is that something this committee could see potentially, the analysis for specifically the Waterloo, Durham and Niagara areas that was undertaken, I believe, last year?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Certainly. We can undertake to look at that and provide further information to you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I would imagine or volunteer, that any discussion pertaining to this designation—I would clearly volunteer, and I'm sure Mr. Leone would as well in his community. We've had several meetings on this issue.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Thank you. We'll move to the NDP. Madame Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci beaucoup, et merci d'être ici ce matin. Ça m'a fait plaisir d'avoir entendu votre discours d'ouverture.

Je crois que c'est dans votre premier paragraphe que vous avez vraiment expliqué que, bien que votre budget soit petit, 5,1 millions de dollars—c'est sûr que ce que mon collègue a dit est vrai. Hier, on a passé la journée avec le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, un budget de 48 milliards de dollars. Mais c'est vraiment dans vos actions. J'ai aimé la façon dont vous l'avez décrit : « nourrir » la collaboration.

Du côté des néo-démocrates, on a une longue série de questions à vous poser—pas tant au sujet de comment votre cinq virgule quelques millions sont dépensés, parce que vous avez quand même passé beaucoup de temps à nous dire exactement où les différents argents sont



dépensés, et ce que vous nous avez dit, ça colle vraiment bien au document que l'on a. Donc, peut-être une petite question par rapport à une petite ligne budgétaire, mais le restant, ça va vraiment être dans vos responsabilités, les responsabilités de nourrir la collaboration pour s'assurer que, à l'intérieur de tout l'appareil gouvernemental, on prend la responsabilité de mettre en oeuvre la Loi sur les services en français de façon appropriée.

Donc, juste pour vous donner un peu une idée de ce sur quoi on a l'intention de parler, certainement, dans un premier temps, on va se parler un petit peu de la conférence de la francophonie et du Sommet de la Francophonie, des questions par rapport à ça, et les profils qui s'en viennent, quelques questions par rapport à ça.

Vous aurez beaucoup de questions par rapport à l'utilisation des tierces parties. C'est sûr que dans le rapport du commissaire on en parle, mais c'est quand même une plateforme importante du gouvernement par rapport au budget qui a été présenté.

On va se reparler de la maternelle à temps plein. Je sais que c'est quelque chose dont on s'est déjà parlé en Chambre et autrement, mais on va s'en reparler pendant le temps qu'on va passer ensemble.

On va se parler également des coordonnateurs et coordonnatrices des services en français qui existent dans les différents ministères. Je sais que, madame la Ministre, vous avez parlé des six entités de planification. Il y aura des questions face à ça également.

Et une petite question qui est par rapport avec rien, par rapport aux coupures de presse. Je vais vous en donner plus de détails un peu plus tard.

On va se parler également de la fin du programme de bourses pour étudier en français. C'est quelque chose qui a fait les journaux dernièrement et dont on aimerait avoir plus de renseignements.

C'est sûr et certain que j'ai présenté un projet de loi et je présente des pétitions de façon répétitive par rapport au commissaire aux services en français et sa première recommandation, qui vise à ce qu'il se rapporte directement à l'Assemblée législative. Donc, on va se parler de ça.

On va se parler également de l'éducation postsecondaire avec l'idée—ça aussi vient directement de notre commissaire, mais c'était quand même un dossier qu'on suivait depuis longtemps, l'offre de services en français par nos maisons d'éducation postsecondaire, que ça soit du côté collégial ou universitaire, et les collèges privés.

On va se parler un peu de ce que nos collègues ont commencé à discuter ce matin : la désignation, des changements que vous y avez faits et des changements qu'on aimerait y voir également, pour voir s'il y a la possibilité d'un terrain d'entente face à ça.

On se parlera également un petit peu d'immigration, de certains problèmes qu'on a vus face à l'aide à l'enfance.

On va revenir sur des dossiers de communication où il y a eu quand même des bévues assez remarquables de certains ministères face aux communications bilingues.

On va se reparler également des services juridiques qui sont ou ne sont pas accessibles en français, surtout ceux qui ne le sont pas. Ceux qui le sont, bon, tant mieux. Pour ceux qui ne sont pas encore là, on aimerait savoir, quand vous parlez de nourrir la collaboration avec les différents ministères, comment est-ce que ça se passe dans le jour à jour?

J'en ai un paquet d'autres. Donc, si jamais mes collègues ne sont pas capables de remplir leurs sept heures, moi, je n'ai aucun problème. Je pourrais prendre les sept heures à moi toute seule, puis il y aura encore des questions lorsqu'on aura fini. Donc, ne gênez-vous pas. Si jamais vous avez trop de temps, vous pouvez le partager avec le parti néo-démocrate. Le parti néo-démocrate a des questions en masse. Je pourrais vous en passer même si vous en manquez.

C'était juste pour vous donner un petit survol de ce qui va s'en venir.

On va commencer avec des choses qui devraient être quand même assez simples, juste pour ouvrir la discussion. On aimerait avoir plus de—c'est vraiment des éclaircissements plus que d'autres choses.

On sait qu'on dépense un gros 30 000 \$ pour la conférence de la francophonie, pour être membre de ça. J'aimerais avoir un petit plus de détails. Quel est notre statut dans la conférence de la francophonie? Comment est-ce qu'il diffère des autres membres, ou est-il identique? Et même chose au niveau du Sommet de la Francophonie : quel est notre statut et comment est-ce que le statut de l'Ontario est comparable ou différent aux autres entités qui sont membres?

Je commencerai avec ça.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur :** Okay, merci beaucoup. Une bonne question.

La francophonie internationale et notre statut en Ontario : on est invité par le gouvernement fédéral. On ne fait pas parti à part entière de cet organisme, différent du Québec et du Nouveau-Brunswick, parce que dans les années 1980 l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie avait ouvert une fenêtre pour inviter des gouvernements, non pas chefs de pays, mais comme des provinces du Canada. S'ils voulaient faire partie de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, ils pouvaient—ayant un statut un peu différent, mais ils pouvaient.

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Alors, le Québec et le Nouveau-Brunswick ont pris cette opportunité-là, à ce moment-là, pour faire la demande, et ils ont le droit à être acceptés par tous les pays membres de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. Alors, ils ont été acceptés à ce moment-là, et maintenant ils sont assis à la table. Mais quand tu as un vote, c'est seulement le Canada qui a le droit de vote. Alors, ils ont un statut un peu différent, mais ils en font partie, ils sont invités. Ils ne sont pas invités par le gouvernement canadien, mais ils sont invités comme provinces à se présenter et ils sont assis à la table.

Nous, pour des raisons que j'ignore, on n'a pas fait cette demande-là. Je pense que les deux autres provinces,

c'est à cause du nombre de francophones. On sait que le Québec est à majorité francophone; le Nouveau-Brunswick, je dirais que c'est 40 % de la population. Alors, c'est pour cette raison-là.

Alors, on est invité par le gouvernement fédéral. On a toujours été invité et on continue d'être invité, mais lorsqu'on va là, on ne peut pas être assis à la table. On peut entrer pour les débats seulement si on est invité par le fédéral. Les fois où j'y ai participé, c'était le Québec qui m'a invitée à entrer parce qu'ils ont tant de sièges en arrière là, le groupe qui n'est pas assis à la table; ils ont tant de sièges à l'arrière. Alors, on est invité, non pas à participer, mais à assister.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Est-ce que le gouvernement est satisfait de cette situation? Est-ce que c'est quelque chose qu'on aimerait changer, améliorer, ou on est satisfait du statu quo qu'on a là?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** On a demandé à quelques reprises au gouvernement fédéral qu'on soumette notre candidature pour demander qu'on devienne membre, et ça a toujours été refusé. Mais même si le gouvernement fédéral demandait à ce qu'on devienne un gouvernement invité à la table, il reste que ça doit être approuvé par tous les pays membres.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Et est-ce qu'on peut en faire demande directement à l'OIF?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non, c'est le gouvernement fédéral qui doit le faire.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Et quelles sont les raisons que le gouvernement fédéral nous donne pour ne pas demander que l'Ontario soit reconnu comme entité à part entière?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ils ne donnent pas de raisons.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, right. Est-ce qu'on leur a demandé—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Puis aussi, il ne faut pas oublier que c'est très dispendieux, être membre. C'est des millions de dollars qu'on doit pour devenir membre, puis la contribution annuelle. Alors, c'est dispendieux aussi.

Ceci dit, on a fait la demande, alors à chaque fois qu'il y a une élection fédérale, on demande—en fait, quand ça change de parti, parce qu'on l'a demandé sous les libéraux, on l'a demandé sous les conservateurs, et la réponse a toujours été non. Maintenant, quand je vois qu'on devrait prendre des millions de dollars pour devenir membre—je n'ai pas à prendre la décision, parce que ça a été refusé, mais par contre, je préfère prendre cet argent-là, puis l'investir dans les francophones de l'Ontario.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Si l'on compare le statut de l'Ontario à la Francophonie versus le statut de l'Ontario à l'organisation du Commonwealth, qui est plus ou moins l'équivalent anglophone, est-ce que vous pouvez faire des commentaires dans le sens que, pourquoi est-ce que, du côté anglophone, l'Ontario n'a pas de la misère à payer les frais de cotisation et à être reconnu comme entité à part entière à la table, et lorsqu'on parle de

l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, bien là, on est invité lorsque quelqu'un nous invite, mais on n'est pas reconnu?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Moi, je n'ai pas de réponse là-dessus, mais peut-être que mon sous-ministre—

**M. Paul Genest:** On peut examiner la question. Je ne suis pas familier avec les règles concernant le Commonwealth, mais comme madame a dit, la demande pour être membre, pour Ontario, serait environ cinq millions de dollars, le même montant que notre budget total en ce moment. Alors, je pense que le fédéral, pour eux, c'est le coût, et c'est un aspect de leur résistance en ce moment.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Vous me dites que le Nouveau-Brunswick paie 100 millions pour être membre?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non, pas 100; ici, c'était cinq millions, pas 100 millions.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ah, cinq.

**M. Paul Genest:** Pardon, cinq.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Donc, vous me dites que le Nouveau-Brunswick paie cinq millions pour être membre?

**M. Paul Genest:** Je pense que c'est la proportion d'une population. L'Ontario a une population beaucoup plus grande que le Nouveau-Brunswick, alors les frais seraient plus élevés.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais ça si vous pouviez faire la demande pour savoir exactement quels seraient les frais pour que l'Ontario soit membre à part entière de l'organisme de la francophonie, et également faire la comparaison—on paie déjà pour être membre à part entière de l'organisme anglophone qui s'appelle le Commonwealth—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mais je voudrais préciser ici : ça n'a rien à faire avec les coûts présentement, parce que le fédéral n'accepte pas de conduire notre demande. Alors, comme on dit, « It's a moot point ».

Ce que j'entends c'est que peut-être il y a eu, dans les années 1980, une entente avec le fédéral que le Nouveau-Brunswick paierait tant, ou le Québec paierait tant, puis le fédéral paierait la différence, mais je ne suis pas au courant vraiment de l'entente qu'il a eu avec eux.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Bien, je crois qu'on a eu à peu près les mêmes informations, vous et moi. Quand on fait des investigations en ce sens du côté du parti néo-démocrate, on nous ressort toujours cet argument monétaire que personne ne peut vraiment chiffrer, etc., mais ça sort toujours. Donc, j'aimerais ça si on pouvait le vérifier. L'entente, elle existe. Le Nouveau-Brunswick, qui est une province quand même beaucoup moins riche que l'Ontario, est capable d'être membre à part entière. Comment est-ce qu'ils paient? Comment est-ce que leur co-part a été décidé? Comment est-ce que ça se ferait?

Il me semble qu'on aurait un argumentaire beaucoup plus solide si on arrivait à dire : « OK, bien, voici vraiment ce que ça va nous coûter. » Si ça nous coûterait 100 millions, oublions ça; moi non plus, je ne voudrais pas être membre de cette affaire-là. Je ne pense pas que ça vaut ce coût-là. Mais tant et aussi longtemps qu'on a



des chiffres en l'air, c'est comme la raison de ne pas poursuivre, quand en réalité on ne le sait pas, le montant que ça coûterait à l'Ontario—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mais je répète encore : ça n'a rien à faire avec la poursuite. On poursuit, on demande—et puis on a demandé aussi au Québec et au Nouveau-Brunswick de nous dire combien ça leur coûtait et ils ont refusé de nous donner l'information.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ah oui?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** C'est bizarre parce qu'on partage quand même assez facilement cette information-là quand on parle du Commonwealth.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Vous parlez du Commonwealth. Moi, je ne suis pas au courant du tout de comment ça fonctionne, alors je ne veux pas répondre pour des choses qui ne sont pas de mon ressort. Aussi, à un moment donné, on avait demandé et on a su qu'il y avait eu de la résistance des deux autres provinces pour qu'on devienne membre.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Bien, si jamais c'est faisable, si on pouvait leur demander—vous pouvez certainement utiliser l'argumentaire que dans le comité des estimés on vous a demandé cette information-là et que vous refaites la demande pour savoir ce qui en est et partager avec les membres du comité le type de réponse qu'on a eu. Peu importe la réponse qu'ils vous donnent, je vais l'accepter en autant que la demande ait été faite pour qu'on sache de combien d'argent on parle vraiment. Pour moi, les deux sont reliés parce qu'à chaque fois qu'on fait des demandes dans cette direction-là, j'ai toujours à peu près la même réponse que vous venez de nous donner, une réponse historique qui dit : « Eux autres l'ont eu. Nous autres, on est là, mais on est là comme le cousin qu'on amène parce qu'il le faut mais que vraiment, s'il ne venait pas on serait aussi content que s'il était là. » Puis, après ça, on relie ça avec la partie monétaire, qui est toujours un petit peu floue. Ça a l'air d'être beaucoup mais on ne sait pas le montant.

Si on est capable d'aller chercher un petit peu de clarté, ou même si on est capable d'aller demander pour clarifier les choses et de partager ça avec les membres du comité, bien, ça répondrait à nos questions.

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**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je ne sais pas si le parti néo-démocrate, lorsqu'il était au pouvoir, a fait la demande. Je ne sais pas si les conservateurs, lorsqu'ils étaient au pouvoir, ont fait la demande. Mais je peux vous dire que depuis que je suis ministre, on a fait la demande à deux reprises et la réponse a toujours été négative.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Bien, certainement, si vous voulez partager avec le comité votre lettre de demande et la réponse que vous avez reçue, dans un premier temps, ça serait bien bien acceptable. S'il y a des démarches qui ont été faites par rapport aux deux autres provinces, j'accepterais des documents historiques. On a demandé au Québec; le Nouveau-Brunswick est celui qui m'intéresse le plus parce que là aussi, les francophones

sont en situation minoritaire, donc il nous ressemble un petit peu plus que le Québec. S'il y a des démarches qui ont été faites avec le Nouveau-Brunswick, même si c'est daté un petit peu, on accepterait ça également comme un premier pas pour satisfaire les demandes du comité.

Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres choses que vous aimeriez rajouter par rapport à la conférence de la francophonie?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Les ministres de la francophonie?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Non, la conférence de la francophonie. Vous avez dit qu'on payait 30 000 \$ par année pour—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est la conférence ministérielle, la conférence des ministres de la francophonie. Une fois là, il y a la réunion des ministres responsables pour la francophonie. Ça peut peut-être vous surprendre, mais toutes les provinces et les territoires ont un ministre responsable de la francophonie. On se rencontre; une fois là, on fait le point sur les avancées, dans notre province, de la francophonie. On échange aussi des meilleures pratiques. Je vois ça comme un forum, aussi, pour s'entraider entre les provinces et les territoires. S'ils présentent un projet qu'ils ont fait, un accomplissement, on peut l'emprunter. Par exemple, nous, lorsqu'on a changé la définition d'un francophone pour nos statistiques à la demande des gens qui parlaient français, qui ne parlaient souvent même pas anglais, mais pour qui le français n'était pas la langue maternelle parce que la mère parlait une autre langue, et ils parlaient très bien le français, on a invité aussi les autres provinces à faire de même. Alors, il y a de l'intérêt des autres provinces.

Ces 30 000 \$, c'est ce qu'on paie. Chaque année il y a une province-hôte. On a déjà été hôte et on va le devenir aussi en 2015 pour célébrer le 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'arrivée de Champlain. Alors, c'est toujours un moment.

Ce qu'on fait aussi, c'est qu'on invite—la province hôte invite—la communauté francophone à un dîner, une réception le soir. Souvent aussi, on présente un spectacle culturel de la communauté francophone de ce groupe-là. Alors, c'est de grand intérêt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Dans la conférence des ministres de la francophonie, combien de provinces ont un ministre de la francophonie versus, comme nous, un ministre délégué aux services en français—je ne me souviens plus du titre exact. Je pense que c'est ça, hein?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones. Il n'y a une personne qui a un ministère de la francophonie. C'est une responsabilité en dessus d'autres. Alors, c'est plutôt qu'ils ont différents noms—un bureau de la francophonie. Le bureau, des fois, il y a quelques personnes, comme deux personnes. Alors, c'est à différents niveaux selon le nombre de francophones dans cette province, mais il n'y a personne qui a un ministère de la francophonie.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Au niveau fédéral non plus?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non, c'est patrimoine Canada qui—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Qui est représenté?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Au niveau des territoires, est-ce qu'ils y participent?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui, les 10 provinces et les trois territoires participent. Ils ont un ministre responsable. Au Nunavut, par exemple, le ministre est responsable des langues officielles du Nunavut—il y en a, je pense, une vingtaine—plus la francophonie.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça va pour ce dossier-là.

L'autre va être assez rapide également. Dans les profils qui sont sortis, moi, je m'attendais à ce que vous en sortiez—je vais commencer avec le profil général et les quatre à part sur les francophones. Est-ce qu'il y a un rythme établi, à savoir, est-ce que ça sort à tous les quatre ans, ces choses-là?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui. Alors, on doit attendre le rapport de Statistique Canada, et nos rapports sont basés sur les statistiques du gouvernement fédéral.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Puis le fait que les statistiques du gouvernement fédéral sont quand même sorties il y a plusieurs années, nous—pourquoi ça prend tant de temps? C'est à peu près ça, ma question.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Suite au rapport de Statistique Canada?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oui, c'est ça.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Il y a une analyse qui est faite et qui demande quand même du temps par l'Office. On le fait maintenant, comme on vous l'a dit tantôt, conjointement avec la Fondation Trillium, pour une économie d'échelle. Mais je vais laisser Daniel répondre, la cuisine de pourquoi ça prend du temps avant qu'on ne puisse sortir les nôtres.

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Le profil sur les francophones en général est sorti en 2009, trois ans après le recensement. C'est fait sur des calculs qui sont assez techniques; je ne suis pas expert là-dedans. On pourrait l'expliquer en grand détail technique si vous voulez, mais on travaille avec les statisticiens de Statistique Canada qui font des calculs. Surtout avec la nouvelle définition de francophone, c'est tout un nouveau—il y a des algorithmes complètement différents de ceux qui existaient avant. Donc, Statistique Canada rend disponibles ces statistiques-là de façon progressive. Donc, ils sortent des « raw » statistiques; ensuite, on peut creuser de plus en plus creux là, au fur et à mesure, mais ce n'est pas disponible nécessairement dans la première année ou la deuxième année. Donc, il faut vraiment acheter du travail de Statistique Canada. Il faut obtenir le temps de leurs statisticiens pour qu'ils puissent se pencher sur nos demandes spécifiques. Donc, on achète en fait ces données-là de Statistique Canada.

Le profil général des francophones en Ontario a été publié en 2009. Pour les quatre autres profils, on devrait être en mesure de publier bientôt. Le travail est presque terminé, mais c'est vraiment de creuser encore plus loin dans les données. Les calculs prennent plus de temps, puis il faut quand même acheter le temps des statisticiens de Statistique Canada aussi.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mais là, les profils qu'ils vont sortir à la fin de 2012, est-ce qu'ils vont être sur les données de Statistique Canada de 2006?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** De 2006.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Il y a quand même six ans.

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Puis ça, c'est acceptable, c'est raisonnable, c'est le mieux qu'on puisse faire?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** C'est un peu un jugement, là. On est un peu à la merci, quand même, de Statistique Canada, puis à la disponibilité de leurs statisticiens, pour qu'ils puissent faire les calculs pour nous. C'est des commandes qu'on leur fait, puis on les reçoit quand on peut les recevoir.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Étant donné les changements qui ont été faits, du côté fédéral, à la façon dont les statistiques sont gardées, est-ce qu'on pense que ça va avoir un effet sur le type de rapport que vous êtes capables de produire?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça va avoir un effet, bien sûr, et on a exprimé notre position aux sondages plus courts. Maintenant, ils vont nous être utiles, parce que là, ils ont rajouté les francophones dedans. Alors, ça va nous être utile quand même. Maintenant, est-ce qu'on va pouvoir avoir toute l'information dont on a besoin? Je pense qu'il faut attendre de voir, là, le premier exercice. On ne peut pas répondre à ça présentement.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Un autre rapport qu'on utilise beaucoup du côté néo-démocrate, c'est le rapport sur l'état de santé des francophones en Ontario. Je voudrais juste savoir quelle est la relation entre votre bureau et l'équipe qui met ça en place, puis comment on fait pour s'assurer qu'il y en aura un autre.

0920

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça, c'est une question qui doit être demandée au ministère de la Santé; ça ne relève pas de nous. Bien sûr, c'est un point qu'on a soulevé régulièrement. Il y a eu un sondage qui avait été fait il y a plusieurs années quand même, et puis on a demandé : « Moi, je veux savoir, est-ce que la santé des francophones s'améliore ou ne s'améliore pas? » C'est un petit peu l'argument dont on s'est servi pour pouvoir avoir les entités de planification. Alors, oui, mon argument, c'est qu'on doit savoir si la santé s'améliore, puis on doit mettre aussi des programmes qui collent aux francophones. Peut-être que les programmes de santé pour les anglophones ont des priorités différentes de ceux pour les francophones.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je suis parfaitement d'accord avec ça. Si on regarde plus en détail ce rapport-là, la première chose que le rapport dit sur l'état de santé des francophones, c'est comment les bases de données sont limitées. Donc, les grosses bases de données du ministère de la Santé sur lesquelles on—pas moi, « on » excluant la personne qui parle—sur lesquelles les chercheurs se basent pour faire des profils de santé ne capturent pas la langue. Donc, pour les chercheurs qui ont fait l'état de santé des francophones en Ontario, c'est vraiment un travail de moine. Cette affaire-là, c'est très, très difficile



parce que les bases de données, à la base, ne l'ont pas. J'aimerais savoir si votre ministère a nourri la collaboration—j'essaie d'utiliser le langage que vous avez utilisé—avec le ministère de la Santé pour leur dire qu'on aimerait que dans les grosses banques de données, qui sont utilisées par tous les chercheurs en santé pour faire les états de santé de bien des populations, on capture la langue. Est-ce que c'est quelque chose sur laquelle votre ministère se penche?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui, tout à fait. En fait, à chaque fois qu'il y a une banque de données qui est développée, les statistiques qui vont servir à orienter les services de différents ministères, je suis toujours là pour dire : « Est-ce que vous avez les francophones? Est-ce qu'on peut identifier les francophones? » Comme ce site Internet-là où les gens qui n'ont pas de médecin peuvent aller s'inscrire et voir quelle langue les médecins parlent. Alors, j'ai insisté pour qu'on puisse savoir la langue—pas seulement la langue française, s'il y a un médecin qui parle quatre langues. Bien, on sait que la communication entre le professionnel de la santé et le patient est très importante. Puis, ça peut sauver beaucoup d'argent aussi.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame. Merci au NPD. On se trouve maintenant avec 20 minutes—30 minutes, je m'excuse—à la ministre.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** So it's a very interesting hour, and the questions—I'm glad to see all the interest. I'm glad to have an opportunity today to highlight the important role and mandate of the French Language Services Commissioner. As I mentioned earlier, the creation of the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner is one of my greatest accomplishments as minister responsible for francophone affairs.

Maître François Boileau a été nommé le premier commissaire aux services en français le 1<sup>er</sup> août 2007 pour deux ans, puis a été renommé pour trois ans en 2009. J'ai récemment eu le plaisir d'annoncer le renouvellement de son mandat pour un autre cinq ans.

Avec une très petite équipe de cinq personnes et des ressources financières modestes, le Commissariat aux services en français a déjà produit cinq rapports annuels, un rapport spécial et plusieurs rapports d'enquête qui comprennent des recommandations importantes auxquelles le gouvernement a donné suite de façon proactive, dans le but d'améliorer la prestation globale du gouvernement en matière de services en français.

Il me semble à propos que je fasse avec vous aujourd'hui un survol rapide des avancées que le gouvernement a faites, suite aux recommandations du commissaire.

The objective of my next remarks is to demonstrate further that we have accomplished a lot as a result of our combined efforts.

Dans son tout premier rapport annuel 2007-08, publié le 17 juin 2008, le commissaire a formulé trois recommandations à propos de la structure de coordination des services en français au sein du gouvernement de l'Ontario, de la prestation des services par des tierces parties et la définition inclusive de « francophone ».

First, the commissioner recommended that I revise the role of the French-language service coordinators to ensure that right from the strategic-planning stage they are able to directly influence the directions and design of the policies, programs, services and products of each government agency subject to the French Language Services Act.

Nous avons donc procédé à une analyse en profondeur du modèle en place et répondu de façon favorable à cette recommandation.

Ainsi, le nouveau modèle de gouvernance pour la coordination des services en français est entré en vigueur en avril 2009. Trois nouveaux regroupements de ministères ont été créés, soit ceux de l'éducation et des services communautaires, terre et ressources, et économie et organismes centraux. Les autres regroupements déjà existants, soit santé et justice, sont demeurés inchangés.

L'objectif principal du remaniement des ressources de coordination des services en français ainsi que la décision de rendre les directeurs généraux administratifs responsables des services en français ont permis de repositionner les services en français au sein du gouvernement afin d'assurer une approche cohérente et efficace à la planification des services en français à travers tous les ministères.

Nous croyons que cette transformation a bien réussi, particulièrement dans un contexte de réduction des ressources.

Ce sujet a été rendu possible par l'engagement des chefs des services en français, des coordonnateurs et le soutien de leurs directeurs généraux respectifs.

Bien qu'il soit toujours possible d'améliorer l'accès et la qualité des services en français offerts par les organismes gouvernementaux, le volume de travail du personnel responsable de la coordination des services en français va en augmentant au fur et à mesure que le gouvernement met en oeuvre de nouvelles initiatives telles que le règlement sur la livraison des services en français par les tiers au nom d'organismes gouvernementaux.

For this reason, we intend to fulfill the commitment to undertake an evaluation of a French-language services coordination mechanism across the government. This will help us ensure that the new structure is responsive to rapidly changing needs, and that ministries have the tools necessary to actively offer quality French-language services.

Dans son premier rapport, le commissaire m'avait aussi recommandé de proposer une réglementation claire pour régir la prestation des services en français, soit en vertu d'un contrat conclu avec un tiers qui a convenu de fournir des services pour le compte d'un organisme gouvernemental, ou encore, en vertu d'un nouveau partenariat public-privé.

I'm very proud to remind everyone that the new regulation was approved in June 2011 and took effect on July 1, 2011. To help government agencies better understand the requirements of the regulations, the Office of

Francophone Affairs organized an information forum, which took place on July 18, 2011. Over 100 participants, representing ministries and other government agencies, attended the all-day session. This forum included presentations by the deputy minister responsible for francophone affairs, the OFA and the crown law office, as well as the session on best practices related to the delivery of French-language services by third parties.

Ce règlement exige que les organismes gouvernementaux qui choisissent de faire appel à des tierces parties pour livrer leurs services en leur nom continuent à s'assurer que ces services soient offerts en conformité avec la Loi sur les services en français. Bien que cette obligation existe déjà sous cette loi, le règlement clarifie que les ministères ne peuvent se soustraire à leur obligations, et leur donne un délai de trois ans pour se conformer.

0930

La troisième et dernière recommandation du premier rapport du commissaire me demandait de revoir la définition de la population francophone de l'Ontario afin de s'assurer de refléter adéquatement la nouvelle réalité de cette population.

Je suis très fière de souligner que nous avons aussi répondu à cette recommandation avec l'adoption en 2009 de la définition inclusive de « francophone », ce qui démontre le leadership de l'Ontario, le premier gouvernement au Canada à articuler une définition plus inclusive et moderne, au sein du Canada, de sa communauté francophone.

Up until then, francophones were defined as those whose mother tongue was French. With this new definition, some people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English are considered francophones when taking into account their knowledge of French as an official language and their use of French at home.

The new definition better reflects the reality of many new Canadians who feel more comfortable in receiving their services in French, although their mother tongue may not be French.

Elle a certes été développée en réponse à la recommandation du commissaire, mais aussi suite aux nombreuses requêtes de la communauté.

En retour d'un investissement très minime, cette nouvelle définition aide le gouvernement à mieux planifier la demande de services en français en Ontario, tout en reflétant l'évolution de la diversité de la communauté franco-ontarienne d'aujourd'hui.

Le premier rapport annuel du commissaire nous aura permis de faire de grandes avancées. Ces trois premières recommandations ont toutes engendrées des changements porteurs démontrant la pertinence de la création du commissariat et rappelant l'esprit de collaboration mutuelle que nous avons réussi à mettre en place dès le début de son mandat.

Le deuxième rapport annuel du commissaire, rendu public le 21 octobre 2009, comprenait quatre nouvelles recommandations qui ont confirmé l'étendue du champ

d'action du commissaire et sa vision globale de la portée de son mandat.

Le commissaire a recommandé au procureur général de l'Ontario de prendre un rôle de leadership en faisant adopter des critères clairs, simples et publics afin de guider les ministères dans la traduction des règlements.

En parallèle, le commissaire a aussi recommandé au ministre du Procureur général de l'Ontario de s'assurer que tous les ministères respectent ces critères et qu'ils établissent une liste des règlements à faire traduire en priorité, fondée sur les besoins de la communauté francophone.

Cette recommandation demandait également au ministre du Procureur général de rendre compte annuellement des progrès accomplis dans le cadre de son plan stratégique pour le développement des services en français dans le domaine de la justice. Dans cette perspective, le ministère a créé un comité qui s'est penché sur l'adoption de critères clairs et simples pour la traduction des règlements en vue de les rendre publics, l'élaboration d'une stratégie pour faire en sorte que les ministères se conforment à ces critères et l'adoption d'une approche cohérente pour établir l'ordre de priorité des règlements à traduire et d'un plan d'action qui sera approuvé par tous les partenaires. Ce travail s'est entamé et se poursuit toujours.

In his second annual report, the commissioner also recommended that, for 2010-11, cabinet office develop a mandatory policy on human resources for French-language services, including for management-level positions. This policy must also include strategies for designation, removal of designation, recruitment, retention and professional development.

Encore une fois, le gouvernement s'est mis au travail sans tarder afin de donner suite à cette recommandation. En collaboration avec Ressources humaines Ontario, l'Office des affaires francophones a élaboré et mis en oeuvre une politique sur les postes désignés bilingues couvrant la désignation, le recrutement et la dé-désignation des postes désignés bilingues dans la fonction publique de l'Ontario.

Dans la mesure où elle fait partie de la politique opérationnelle de dotation en personnel de la fonction publique de l'Ontario, cette politique est obligatoire.

To complement the policy, the OFA also developed a manager's guide to designated bilingual positions, which articulates clear and user-friendly steps, requirements and strategies for the designation of positions, removal of positions, removal of designations, recruitment, retention and professional development of bilingual staff.

With respect to the commissioner's recommendation regarding the designation of senior management positions, the OFA continues to explore with Human Resources Ontario how best to approach this matter.

Le deuxième rapport annuel du commissaire comprenait une recommandation visant directement l'Office des affaires francophones. Le commissaire a recommandé au Conseil des ministres de s'assurer que l'Office des affaires francophones réalise pleinement son



mandat au sein du gouvernement, entre autres en révisant à la hausse les ressources accordées à l'Office ainsi que la coordination des services en français pour l'année financière 2010-2011 et les années subséquentes.

Dès le départ, j'ai confirmé que nous étions d'accord avec la recommandation du commissaire en ce qui concerne le rôle essentiel joué par l'Office des affaires francophones au sein de la fonction publique de l'Ontario et la nécessité d'investir dans les services en français pour l'ensemble du gouvernement.

En faite, depuis 2003, mon gouvernement a investi des sommes importantes dans les services en français.

Depuis 2005-2006, nous avons augmenté de 33 % le budget de l'Office des affaires francophones, avec, entre autres, l'ajout de quatre postes permanents. De plus, depuis sa création en 2007-2008, le budget du Commissariat aux services en français a été augmenté de 14 % avec l'ajout d'un nouveau poste d'enquêteur.

Nevertheless, having said this, everyone has to be cognizant of the fact that the province is facing tough financial conditions. The OFA as well as all ministries have to find ways to achieve their outcomes in the most efficient way possible, and that does not always translate into additional resources. We have also invested substantially in French-language education and health, among others.

Dans sa quatrième recommandation, le commissaire a suggéré au procureur général de l'Ontario de se doter d'un comité composé de membres de la magistrature et du barreau, et de praticiens de la communauté francophone.

Ce comité devait avoir le mandat de rechercher activement des moyens de parfaire les connaissances en droits linguistiques de tous les membres de la magistrature en Ontario de nomination fédérale ou provinciale.

Ce comité devait également avoir le mandat de proposer des pistes d'action concrètes et concertées pour pallier le manque de juges bilingues en Ontario.

I am pleased to confirm that the Ministry of the Attorney General is already taking steps to increase the number of bilingual judges, but also accepts the commissioner's recommendation that the appointment process of bilingual judges by both the provincial and the federal government could be improved. The commissioner's recommendation about training and language rights will also be passed on to the judiciary, which has the sole authority over judicial training.

La recommandation du commissaire concernant la formation sur les droits linguistiques a été transmise à la magistrature, qui est la seule autorité en matière de formation judiciaire.

Le comité du barreau et de la magistrature a été créé. Il est co-présidé par le juge Paul Rouleau et M. Paul LeVay, et nous attendons la publication de son prochain rapport.

Le commissaire a formulé de nombreuses recommandations dans son troisième rapport annuel 2009-2010, publié le 3 juin 2010.

Le commissaire aux services en français m'a tout d'abord recommandé de développer et faire adopter une directive claire sur l'offre active en matière des services en français par le Conseil de gestion en 2010-2011 et ce, à l'égard de tous les ministères et organismes gouvernementaux.

The government certainly agrees with the commissioner that the active offer of French-language services is the key to ensuring that ministries respect the spirit of the French Language Services Act. For this reason, the government has consistently supported and promoted the broad application of this concept since 2006, when the OFA began communicating its importance to the whole public service.

L'inclusion d'une disposition sur l'offre active dans le nouveau règlement sur la prestation des services en français par les tiers pour le compte des organismes gouvernementaux établit clairement l'obligation légale de fournir des services en français de façon proactive.

#### 0940

Dans ce troisième rapport annuel, le commissaire aux services en français recommandait aussi que le gouvernement mette en place une stratégie de promotion permanente de l'offre de services gouvernementaux en français auprès de la population francophone partout en Ontario.

It is important to remember that the government agrees that it is important to inform Franco-Ontarians of the availability of French-language services. In this respect, the Ontario government continues to explore possible ways of ensuring that the availability of French-language services in Ontario is well known within both the current fiscal environment and the existing legal framework.

À noter qu'il devrait être possible de promouvoir l'offre active des services en français par l'entremise d'un éventail d'approches innovatrices sans avoir à développer de campagne distincte de promotion ou de publicité. Il faut aussi ajouter qu'il revient à la communauté et à ses organismes de se prévaloir de ces services.

Le commissaire aux services en français m'a aussi rappelé une recommandation précédente de son premier rapport annuel en m'enjoignant fortement à donner suite à sa recommandation et de mettre en place en 2010-2011 un cadre réglementaire sur les services offerts par des tiers afin de mettre fin aux échappatoires actuelles.

Comme je vous l'ai déjà indiqué plus tôt, dans le contexte de la recommandation formulée par le premier rapport annuel du commissaire, le nouveau règlement a été approuvé en juin 2011 et est entré en vigueur le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 2011.

Dans son rapport 2009-2010, le commissaire aux services en français m'a aussi recommandé de m'assurer que toute loi autorisant une privatisation contienne des clauses spécifiques indiquant expressément que les droits prévus dans la Loi sur les services en français continueront de s'appliquer.

Vous savez très bien que le gouvernement de l'Ontario a fait preuve d'un engagement ferme à servir les Ontariens et Ontariennes de langue française dans leur langue de façon proactive.

Therefore, while managing the province's current economic challenges, our government will not lose sight of its commitment towards the Franco-Ontarian community and meeting its obligations under the French Language Services Act, whether the role of the private sector in delivering government services is expanded or not. The Minister of Finance recently stated that, where the private sector is called upon to deliver a greater number of government services, French-language services will remain, in order to better serve our Franco-Ontarian community.

Nous examinons attentivement la recommandation du commissaire aux services en français tout en continuant d'assurer la prestation de services efficaces et de haute qualité pour tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes.

Considérant le rôle joué par la province dans le financement des bureaux de santé publique et de diverses initiatives en santé publique ainsi que dans l'élaboration de normes et priorités en réponse aux besoins particuliers des francophones, le commissaire aux services en français a aussi recommandé en 2009-2012 au ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée d'exiger des bureaux de santé publique, lorsque le financement provient, en tout ou en partie, de la province, qu'ils appliquent la Loi sur les services en français.

We acknowledge the commissioner's concern regarding the availability of French-language public health services to francophone Ontarians, and we are committed to acting on this issue. Last year, the Chief Medical Officer of Health reminded all of the province's medical officers of health that under Ontario's public health standards, public health programs and services have to be tailored to meet the needs of target populations, including francophones, and that our office and the ministry were providing them with many of the resources necessary to ensure effective delivery of services in French.

Par ailleurs, un comité interministériel, composé de représentants des ministères responsables des programmes de santé publique, poursuit son étude de la prestation des services de santé publique en français et a aussi une stratégie pour aider sur le terrain.

Whereas children's aid societies must respect the French Language Services Act, and in light of the fact that their clientele are, more often than not, in a vulnerable situation, the French Language Services Commissioner recommended that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services ensure that children's aid societies actively offer French-language services throughout the province.

The French Language Services Commissioner also recommended that, in co-operation with the children's aid societies, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services create a network or, at the very least, a directory of French-language service providers for the benefit of those children's aid societies that are currently unable to offer these services themselves.

Le ministère des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse a entrepris un processus de transformation en profondeur du système d'aide à l'enfance, une transformation qui entraînera fort probablement le fusionnement de certaines de nos agences. Le gouvernement accorde, certes, une grande attention aux services en français dans le cadre de cet important processus.

I take this opportunity to confirm that the Minister of Children and Youth Services is aware of the unique and important characteristics of individual children's aid societies, such as those serving francophone communities. Throughout the amalgamation process, the ministry works with these unique communities to ensure their specific needs are met.

De plus, ce ministère collabore activement avec l'Association ontarienne des Sociétés d'aide à l'enfance afin d'élaborer des stratégies permettant à cerner les enjeux en matière de capacité de services francophones au sein des sociétés d'aide à l'enfance de toute la province, et s'assurer que l'Association ontarienne des Sociétés d'aide à l'enfance fournit du matériel de formation en français et en anglais à toutes les sociétés d'aide à l'enfance.

Étant donné la transformation significative du système de bien-être de l'enfance qui est en cours, le ministère utilisera une approche par étapes afin de mettre en oeuvre les changements nécessaires pour répondre aux recommandations du commissaire.

Finally, in his third annual report, the French Language Services Commissioner recommended that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care make a regulation to ensure that community care access centres comply with the obligation prescribed by the French Language Services Act. On this issue, the government responded to the commissioner by amending the Community Care Access Corporations Act. We added a new provision to ensure that francophones have the right to use French in their dealings with the community care access centres, and to receive service in French.

Avec l'adoption de cette modification à la Loi, les centres d'accès aux soins communautaires sont tenus de prendre toutes les mesures et tous les moyens raisonnables pour veiller à ce que le public puisse recevoir des services en français.

Par exemple, les bureaux centraux des centres d'accès aux soins communautaires ont l'obligation de veiller à ce que les francophones puissent communiquer en français avec le personnel y oeuvrant et à ce que la documentation soit offerte en français.

À ce moment-ci, je crois que vous conviendrez avec moi que les recommandations du commissaire ont généré de profonds changements et ont confirmé l'étendue et l'ampleur de son mandat. Je poursuis avec le quatrième rapport annuel, déposé l'an dernier, dans lequel le commissaire a formulé quatre recommandations principales.

Il a tout d'abord recommandé à la communauté franco-ontarienne de participer activement au processus de renouvellement de la prestation des services du



gouvernement en proposant des méthodes et moyens innovateurs, pragmatiques et axés sur les résultats pour assurer le développement de cette communauté.

As a government, we welcome the full participation of the province's citizens in the democratic process. We encourage Franco-Ontarians to share their ideas and vision with government and to promote consultation and feedback. We also honour and recognize the importance of the active participation of francophones in the development and growth of the Franco-Ontarian community and the improvement of the services they depend on.

Le commissaire aux services en français a aussi recommandé au ministère des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse de prendre toutes les mesures en son pouvoir pour assurer la mise sur pied de programmes éducatifs en établissement pour les francophones de 13 à 18 ans à Toronto, d'ici la rentrée scolaire de 2011.

I am pleased to remind everyone that our government is committed to building a mental health system that delivers what children and youth need, when they need it, and as close to home as possible.

Sur cette question, le ministère des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse continue d'étudier toutes les options possibles afin de s'assurer que les enfants et les jeunes francophones reçoivent des services équivalents et d'aussi grande qualité que l'ensemble des Ontariens et Ontariennes.

**0950**

En 2011 le commissaire a également recommandé au gouvernement d'analyser la situation pour l'ensemble de la province afin de s'assurer que des programmes d'éducation adéquats soient offerts en français aux adolescents francophones ayant des troubles de comportement, pour leur permettre de réaliser leur plein potentiel.

À cet égard, je souligne que notre gouvernement et le ministère de l'Éducation s'engagent à offrir aux élèves ayant des besoins particuliers le soutien dont ils ont besoin pour réaliser leur plein potentiel.

Le ministère de l'Éducation est à examiner les programmes et services d'éducation régis par l'article 23 offerts à tous les élèves, y compris les élèves francophones ayant besoin de soins, de traitement, de services de garde ou de services correctionnels, afin d'accroître leur bien-être et leur réussite scolaire.

Dans son rapport, le commissaire a aussi recommandé au ministère de l'Environnement de s'assurer que les francophones disposent de toute l'information nécessaire en français leur permettant de participer pleinement au programme de réduction, de réutilisation et de recyclage des déchets de la province pour atteindre les objectifs écologiques fixés par le gouvernement. Pour ce faire, le commissaire a souligné que le ministère devrait prendre des mesures réglementaires afin que toutes les parties concernées se conforment aux obligations de la Loi sur les services en français.

The government agrees with the commissioner that it is important to ensure that francophones have at their disposal in French all the required information to fully participate in the province's waste reduction, reuse and

recycling program in order to meet the government's objectives. In this context, the Ministry of the Environment will continue to communicate with the public on the waste diversion program in both French and English, and to work with our partners to communicate the importance of informing the public in both languages. The ministry will also look at every opportunity to require all its partners to communicate with the public in French and English.

Dans son rapport de l'an dernier, le commissaire a aussi recommandé que le ministère de l'Énergie cherche à modifier la Loi sur l'électricité pour veiller à ce que l'Office de l'électricité de l'Ontario soit assujéti à la Loi sur les services en français pour ce qui est des programmes, services et communications ciblant le grand public.

Le commissaire a également recommandé que le ministère de l'Énergie cherche à modifier la Loi sur l'électricité pour veiller à ce que toute entité, actuelle ou future, créée aux termes de la Loi sur l'électricité, y compris Hydro One et Ontario Power Generation, soit assujéti à la Loi sur les services en français pour ce qui est des programmes, services et communications ciblant le grand public.

Following this recommendation, the Ministry of Energy reiterated that it is fully committed to respecting both the letter and the intent of the French Language Services Act. Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation and the Ontario Power Authority are not formally subject to the French Language Services Act. However, our agencies are committed to also reflecting the spirit of the law.

De plus, l'Office de l'électricité de l'Ontario fait preuve de cet engagement par l'entremise de ses stratégies de communication et des tactiques qui comprennent la production de matériel en français.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame.

That ends our first round of 30 minutes. We'll now move to the official opposition for a 20-minute round.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, thank you very much, Chair.

Madame Meilleur, bienvenue.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Merci.

**M. Rick Nicholls:** Pardonnez-moi. Je parle français juste un peu—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est bien.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** —so I will speak in English, if that's okay with you.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Okay.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much.

Minister, the ministry of francophone affairs projects a 6.7% decrease in the 2012-13 estimates over last year—a decrease of 6.7%. This represents a total decrease of around \$366,000. Can you tell us what has been lost in those cuts?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm going to start, but then I'll turn it over to my officials for more details.

It's related to our agreement that we have with the federal government. They have a budget to support

initiatives in every province through this entente Canada-Ontario or Canada-Quebec. At the end of the year, when the money is not all used by other provinces or they still have money in their budget, they call on provinces to see if they have extra requests, and that's what we did that year. They came to us and they said, "We have close to \$400,000" that they could provide as extra money that year—and we did.

This is not part of this \$1.4-million agreement that we have every year, but it was an extra. I'll turn it over to Paul to see if he can elaborate on that, but—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Just to be clear, then—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:**—that's what it is.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, thank you. Just to be clear and to help out the deputy minister, my understanding, based on what you just said, then, is that the year previous, you received excess because there was extra money available.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** And now you're saying that perhaps this year, there isn't that extra money, and therefore there will be a decrease—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No. We know only at the end of the year. When they have extra money left—not extra money, but when they have money left, they call upon the provinces to ask if they have projects that they would like to—because it's always a matching: 50% by the province, 50% by the federal. That's what they did. It's not a reduction in our budget; it's a transfer of money from the federal government, and it was a one-time.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, Deputy?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Thanks for the question. As the minister said, the Canada-Ontario agreement for the last eight years has involved a \$1.4-million transfer from the federal government. That's included in our overall \$5.1 million; it includes that amount. It's a matching fund, as noted, and we solicit proposals from other ministries, whether education, health or community services, to support special projects to promote the availability of services or initiatives with the francophone community.

The federal government had end-of-year funds. Now, they're not doing this anymore, as they're dealing with their own deficit. End-of-year funds in departments are now going back to consolidated revenue.

They had end-of-year funds, which they made available to us. We were required by the terms of the agreement to find matching funds. These supported special initiatives, which are under the Canada-Ontario agreement. These are opportunities, as it were, that have been lost. We're not in a position to—because of that relative reduction because of the one-time fund. It looked like we had a certain additional amount of money, but that was solely due to the feds transferring that money to us.

The reduction in our budget is not a reduction to our core budget but, rather, in comparison to what they had done the previous year, it's a lesser amount of money. Our core operations have not been affected by the fact that the feds did not repeat that in the past year with end-of-year funds.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much. I truly appreciate that.

Minister, my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex falls within a region of Ontario—the southwestern region—that only accounts for about 6.3% of the francophone population in the province. That's as of the 2001 census. That was the information that we could find on that, and perhaps that has changed. I don't know, if it has changed, how significantly it may have changed.

Can you tell me what your ministry's approach is when it comes to ensuring that Franco-Ontarians in areas such as southwestern Ontario are still getting access to the resources provided by your ministry?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** There is some part of your riding that is designated, so those parts that are designated—Essex is designated. The ministries that are located in your area have to offer their services in French.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. Okay.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So in Essex—part of my riding is Essex, but it's only the small town of Leamington. However, what I will say, though, is that just northwest of me in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is Grande Pointe, Pointe-aux-Roches, Pain Court and, of course, Tilbury. Now, Tilbury has a French population, but I'm thinking, would Grande Pointe, Pointe-aux-Roches and Pain Court fall under those designated areas that you talked about?

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**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui. Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I got that. It was okay.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I just consulted because I don't have all the designated regions in my head, because there are 25 regions, and I don't know exactly the areas that they're comprised of. Essex is the city of Windsor, town of Lakeshore and LaSalle; the former township of Anderdon, Colchester North and Sandwich South, and the former town of Tecumseh. Those are designated.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Those are the designated areas?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm sure that my colleague the Chair would really understand many of those ridings, as many of them do fall into your riding, I believe, Mr. Chair.

It's good to know that, though, as well, because we are surrounded, and I have a lot of friends who grew up in the Pain Court area—good friends. Oftentimes, even from a business perspective, I found myself going up there and working with them. King Grain, at one point in time, was a large corn and grain dealer up in that area, and there are still some operations, though some of them are getting a little bit smaller, as we say. But I often have enjoyed my association with the francophone mix up there as well.

Of course, in my younger days, I used to play a lot of ball, and there are some pretty good ball players up there, I might add as well.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm glad to hear that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Oh, they are. A good friend of mine—



*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I still see him, and he always reminds me of the whupping that he used to put on the boys from Chatham, all the time. I appreciate that.

Minister, your colleague from the Ministry of Health said yesterday that while Ontario is facing a spending shortfall of over \$15 billion, the time has come to do more with less. I think we all agree with that, at this point in time. Can you tell us what this massive deficit has done to affect your ministry's operations?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I have to say that it's a very small budget, as you say—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** But significant, I might add. Just because it's small doesn't mean that it's insignificant, and I think we all agree with that.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It is, but I will say it's significant in the work that we do with \$5 million—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Did I say something wrong? I heard you whispering.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No, it was all, "C'est bon. C'est bon."

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It's \$5 million. We do a lot. A cut in our budget is more significant than in a big budget. We were fortunate that we have seen no cut in our budget. We have seen a small increase, because of our willingness to improve French services.

We help ministries when they have questions, how they go about that, and if we have complaints from the public—because you have to remember that the first complaint, most often, comes—first of all, probably in your office but then in the Office of Francophone Affairs, before it goes to the commissioner. We work with the ministries to help them to resolve the problem, sometimes to strongly convince them that matters should be done otherwise.

When I was first appointed in that office as the minister, the mentality was that they were the police; they were policing. Of course, they have experienced some difficulty with ministries because they used to see the Office of Francophone Affairs as police. The attitude has changed a lot—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Why was that, by the way, Minister? Why would they view it like that?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I guess they were told that it was their role to play police. I didn't like that approach because I always favour working together. How can we help you?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I've heard that before.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes. How can we help you? That's the approach now, and I'm glad to say that we are more successful with this approach. We have coordinators in every ministry to help the ministries, because often they didn't know about the legislation—they knew the legislation was existing, but what was their obligation under that legislation? There was a lot of education that was done with different ministries to help them understand what the legislation is all about and what their obligations were under the legislation. Now

we're doing that with our partners that offer services on behalf of the government and we will do that also with the judicial system. Even if the judges don't speak French, they have to know about the legislation and the obligation under the legislation.

As an educator yourself, you know very well how important it is for people to know their obligation and how they should approach the legislation, how they should move forward to apply the legislation in their own organization.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** How long have you been the minister of francophone affairs?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Since 2003.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Excellent.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm probably the longest-serving minister in that ministry. I enjoy every minute of it.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That must have been when you first joined the Legislature. Is that—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, congratulations on that, too.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Thank you.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Obviously, recognizing what it was in the past and then having a vision and moving forward, I do need to congratulate you on that; I truly do.

Of course, as we talk about how, in times of restraint, we're having to do more with less, you really implemented some very good Conservative values there, and we appreciate that as well.

I had to get that one in. You are to be commended for that as well, because it's not easy.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I have to tell you, I come from a small business family.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Me too, and I understand constraint, believe me. I certainly do.

One other question I have for you: In my riding of Chatham—Kent—Essex, we have several French immersion schools—just outside my riding as well, but only a few kilometres northwest of Chatham. I mentioned Pain Court. We have a French-speaking grade school and high school, École secondaire de Pain Court, in which I have several friends who teach—I mentioned this.

Are you finding right now—and I'm hoping this is a question for you as opposed to an educational question. You mentioned that you had coordinators in the various ministries, if I understood you correctly?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. Are you finding that enrolment in these schools is increasing or decreasing?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I wouldn't be able to answer about Pain Court—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Perhaps overall.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** But I have to say that in my area, the enrolment in French-language schools is going up. We're building. In Toronto, for instance, we're building French schools.

But the immersion is very, very popular and we're very successful. There are more requests about immersion programs and also more time teaching French in the

immersion program. Other provinces and other countries are looking at us and saying: "What did you do to be so successful?" I believe that parents like myself—I was brought up in a very francophone community, and I never heard people speaking English in my area. I learned English—I'm sure that you notice it by my accent—when I was 18 years old. It's not a way that I would favour. It's a lot better when you learn it at school. We had English teachers who were teaching us English, but they didn't know how to speak English, so it was not too successful. The parents now see the importance of their kids speaking one, two, three or four languages, so it's very popular.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That's exciting and encouraging to know, because you did answer in part. The fact that if enrolment is increasing—my question was going to be actually that—what are you doing differently, or what are you doing to create that increase within your ministry so that, in fact, you're finding that there are more schools? What are you doing to encourage that growth?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** What I do, I do it more in the francophone community because I'm minister responsible for francophones. It's to speak to students of the importance of being bilingual in Ontario and the importance of studying in French, because then there is more employment availability because a lot of employers are looking for bilingual people and often they are paid more. Kids like to talk about money, so it's often interesting for them to know that if they have a degree in communications in Toronto and they are bilingual, often we need to pay more and companies need to pay more to attract these individuals.

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Also, I speak to those in French immersion to encourage them to continue their studies in French. With the Université d'Ottawa two years ago, we—because students do their primary and secondary degrees studying perhaps in French but they are afraid that if they go to university they may not be able to understand. They don't feel comfortable to do a bachelor degree in science. We've helped Ottawa U to have a special envelope to help these students who want to do their bachelor in French. They come from immersion, and if they have difficulty, there is some help that is provided to them to be able to do their degree in French.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** When you say "help," is that financial help or is that—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Financial help in the sense that there may be a mentor—comment dit-on en anglais?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** A tutor.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** A tutor, that they can go and see—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Online, perhaps?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Maybe online. It's up to the university how they do that, but it does help these students to pursue their education in French.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** What are some of the challenges that are facing French-speaking schools today?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The challenges in some areas, like the western part of Ontario, are to get the teachers to teach in French. They have, often, a retention problem. They also have—it's more costly to get the tools, the books, and the technical support in French for their schools. Those are some challenges that they have.

In my area, the problem that they have—and in Toronto—is overcrowded schools because there's so much enrolment that they need more schools. We continue to build schools but there is a limit to the budget, so that's—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Is this where your coordinator at the Ministry of Education perhaps could assist in helping you get additional funding—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I do it myself. I don't go through the coordinator. I talk to the ministers myself and they are very responsive. But since 2003 we built a lot of French schools, especially here in Toronto, because one of the problems that the francophone community has is that they finally send their kids to the English school because the French school is an hour and 15 minutes away from their home. We're trying to be smart when we allow for more schools to be built. It's to make sure that they are spread out in Toronto, because—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame. We move to the NDP.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, I say we continue.

On continue dans la même veine par rapport aux écoles, en fait, par rapport aux francophones qui veulent étudier en français.

On sait tous que les étudiants franco-ontariens et franco-ontariennes au niveau postsecondaire n'ont plus accès à une bourse qui les encourageait à poursuivre leurs études en français. Donc, la bourse pour étudier en français a été annulée. On a maintenant le rabais de 30 % pour les droits de scolarité. Mais j'ai lu un article dans *Le Voyageur*, qui est un journal francophone de ma région, dans lequel la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur, indique que, selon une étude, le rabais de 30 % va atteindre plus de francophones que la bourse qui existait pour étudier en français.

Bon, on sait tous que la bourse qui existait, c'était une bourse de 1 500 \$, que tu devais être inscrit dans un programme postsecondaire à temps plein dans une école française ou bilingue, et que c'était seulement pour ta première année. Mais je peux vous dire que pour plusieurs étudiantes et étudiants de ma région, ils ont bénéficié de cette bourse-là, et vraiment, cela a fait la différence. Cela a fait la différence entre aller continuer leurs études du côté francophone ou tout simplement—j'appelle ça descendre ta garde—s'en aller vers un programme d'études en anglais qui les rend beaucoup plus à risque d'être assimilés.

Je suis curieuse par rapport à cette étude-là. Vous avez donné une entrevue à M. Daniel Aubin, le reporter qui a écrit cette chose-là, qui dit que selon l'étude, le rabais de 30 % atteindra plus de francophones. Qui est-ce qui a fait cette étude-là? Qu'est-ce que l'étude dit? On va commencer par ça.



**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Premièrement, ça a été mal rapporté, parce que je ne connais pas d'études. Le rabais de 30 % vient d'être mis en place, mais tout ce que je disais, c'est que la bourse de 1 500 \$ était donnée une fois à des étudiants méritants, c'est-à-dire qu'ils avaient de bons résultats scolaires. La réduction de 30 %, c'est récurrent à chaque année du bac, et c'est pour un total de près de 7 000 \$, alors 1 500 \$ à 7 000 \$. Et cette réduction-là, c'est pour un total de près de 7 000 \$, donc 1 500 \$ à près de 7 000 \$.

L'élimination de cette bourse-là—premièrement, c'est qu'on avait beaucoup de demandes de réduire les frais de scolarité. On sait qu'en Ontario, on avait les plus hauts frais de scolarité. Alors, comment peut-on réduire les frais de scolarité, c'est-à-dire ajouter de l'argent, dans la situation financière à laquelle on faisait face, avec des milliards de dollars de déficit? Ce que le ministère et le ministre ont décidé de faire, c'était d'éliminer des petites bourses, dont celles dédiées aux francophones.

J'ai parlé au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, et il m'a dit que cette réduction-là de 30 % va être revue à la fin de l'année pour voir l'impact que ça va avoir sur les étudiants. Aussi, j'ai fait part de l'élimination de cette bourse. Il s'est engagé à revoir ce problème-là.

Est-ce que je veux voir l'augmentation de 30 %, la mise en place de la bourse de 1 500 \$? En tout cas, c'est quelque chose qui devra être revu après.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Si on regarde la bourse pour les étudiants franco-ontariens et franco-ontariennes, elle a quand même existé pendant longtemps. Est-ce qu'il y a des études où est-ce qu'on a regardé si elle était efficace, si elle a eu un impact?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Il faudrait poser la question au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités. Tout ce que je peux vous dire, c'est qu'il y a des augmentations dans un des collèges francophones, tandis que dans un autre collège, c'est stagnant; il y a peu ou pas d'augmentation de leur clientèle. Alors, je pense qu'il faut poser la question au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Lorsque le ministère des Collèges et Universités a décidé d'enlever la bourse, est-ce qu'ils vous ont contactée? Est-ce qu'ils vous ont demandé quel effet vous pensez que ça va avoir sur les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes? Est-ce que vous avez fait partie de cette discussion-là?

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**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Non. Quand est-ce que vous l'avez su?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je l'ai su quand les collèges ont commencé à me téléphoner et m'écrire à ce sujet-là.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Étant donné votre but de nourrir la collaboration puis tout ça, ce n'est pas un petit peu une surprise, ce genre de chose-là?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Bien, je pense que quand on fait un budget comme ministre après neuf ans, on ne

voit pas dans tous les moindres et menus détails de tout l'impact que des coupures vont avoir. On essaie de prévoir le tout, mais j'aurais aimé être au courant. Est-ce que j'aurais dit : « Je m'objecte à la réduction de 30 % pour garder la bourse de 1 500 \$ »? Je ne pense pas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Est-ce que vous pouvez voir un scénario où on regarde l'impact que la bourse aurait eu et qu'on la ramène? Pour moi, ce n'est pas une question de l'une ou l'autre. La bourse, ce n'était pas de gros montants. On parle de même pas 800 étudiants, 1 500 \$ une fois dans ta vie, c'est tout. C'est surtout les associations étudiantes, les collèges francophones, etc. S'ils sont capables de vous prouver que cela a eu un impact, qu'il y a des jeunes maintenant qui ont choisi de demeurer Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes parce qu'ils ont eu l'opportunité de faire leurs études postsecondaires en français parce que cette bourse-là existait, quel serait le scénario qui nous mènerait à la réintégration de cette bourse-là, peu importe ce qui arrive au 30%? Que le 30 % demeure là, ne demeure pas, etc., ce sont des décisions séparées, mais de ramener cette bourse-là, est-ce qu'il y a un scénario qui pourrait nous amener là?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Premièrement, les étudiants ont demandé de me rencontrer, alors je vais aller les rencontrer, et le ministre a offert aussi de les rencontrer. Pour moi, ce qui est important là, c'est qu'il y a le plus d'étudiants francophones qui vont au collège et à l'université. Pour moi, c'est important. Bien sûr, j'essaie de les encourager à étudier en français.

Alors, je pense que comme gouvernement on a fait beaucoup de démarches pour améliorer ou augmenter le financement de nos collèges francophones d'une façon exceptionnelle, pas seulement parce que, malheureusement, ce n'est pas tous les étudiants qui sont les premiers de classe. Alors le plus d'étudiants qui peuvent aller au collège et à l'université—je sais que les deux collèges francophones s'inquiètent, alors on va voir, avec la cohorte qui entre en septembre, s'il va y avoir plus d'étudiants qui vont profiter de ce rabais-là de 30%, versus les étudiants qui venaient à ce collège-là à cause des 1 500 \$, mais ils devaient aussi avoir de très bonnes notes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, dans votre réponse, ce que je comprends, c'est vraiment les nombres; le critère qui va faire que, oui, on va regarder à la remettre en place ou pas, c'est vraiment le nombre d'inscriptions. Il n'y a pas d'autres critères qui pourraient nous amener vers la destination que l'on veut où cette bourse-là demeurerait en place en même temps qu'autre chose?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ce n'est pas ce que je dis. Maintenant, quand les élèves veulent étudier, veulent poursuivre leurs études, on ne veut pas non plus que le côté financier soit un problème.

Alors, est-ce que la bourse de 1 500 \$ va être remise? Le ministre me dit qu'il va revoir premièrement cette réduction-là de 30 %, le fait que la réduction de 30 % a eu lieu et si cela a un effet positif, et, en même temps, il va aussi revoir le fait que les 1 500 \$ ont été éliminés pour les étudiants méritants.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Est-ce que la population aurait un forum spécifique dans lequel ils pourraient se faire entendre face à ce dossier-là? Et s'il y en a un, est-ce que ce serait avec votre bureau ou est-ce que ce serait avec le ministre des Collèges et Universités?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Les étudiants de la FESFO ont demandé de me rencontrer. Alors, je vais les rencontrer. Mais le ministre offre aussi de les rencontrer. On est ouvert à leurs opinions.

La poursuite des études en français, c'est très important, pas seulement pour les étudiants méritants, mais pour tous les étudiants francophones.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Donc, cette bourse-là existait pendant longtemps, longtemps, mais on n'a jamais regardé à, « Est-ce qu'on devrait la changer? Est-ce qu'elle pourrait mieux servir les francophones? » ou quoi que ce soit. Elle était là. Personne n'a regardé si elle était efficace? On l'a enlevée sans se poser de questions si cela pourrait avoir un impact ou pas?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je pense que la question, il faudrait la demander au ministre. Je ne sais pas s'il y a eu des études qui ont été faites. On l'entend d'une façon—deux ou trois étudiants qui disent : « Moi, je suis allé étudier à l'Université d'Ottawa. Je viens de Welland, puis je suis allé à l'Université d'Ottawa parce que j'avais cette bourse de 1 500 \$. »

Est-ce que cela a eu un impact chez d'autres encore, des étudiants méritants, du point de vue scolaire? Alors, il faut voir. Mais est-ce qu'il y a eu des études de faites? Je ne pourrais pas vous répondre.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mais pas dans votre ministère?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non. Mon ministère ne s'occupe pas de faire ces études-là. Chaque ministère est responsable de l'application de la Loi sur les services en français. Ce qu'on a voulu faire, c'est responsabiliser les ministères et les appuyer pour l'amélioration des services. Mais c'est eux qui sont responsables de l'application de la loi. Je ne voulais pas que l'Office des affaires francophones devienne ghettoïsé—les francophones. Alors, chaque ministère et chaque sous-ministre est évalué aussi sur l'application de la loi.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, est-ce que ça se pourrait qu'ils aient fait une étude de l'impact et que vous ne le saviez simplement pas?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est fort possible. Comme je vous dis, je ne suis pas à la Formation, Collèges et Universités. Alors, il y a peut-être une étude qui a été faite, mais je ne suis pas au courant.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Étant donné que c'est le cas, qu'il fait même les manchettes du côté des médias francophones, et que vous avez donné des entrevues dans ce sens-là, j' imagine qu'on a dû faire un petit peu de recherche du côté de votre député ou de votre sous-ministre ou sous-ministre adjoint. Est-ce qu'ils sont, eux, un peu plus au courant? On n'a pas cherché le dossier un petit peu quand ça a fait les manchettes?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** S'il y avait une étude de faite?

**M. Paul Genest:** Non, je ne connais pas—je ne sais pas s'il y a une étude comme telle. Je vais poser la question aux collègues qui travaillent dans le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

Mais comme M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur vient de dire, M. le ministre Murray a fait un engagement de réexaminer la question à la fin de la journée et c'est bien probable qu'il aura besoin de faits et de résultats concrets.

Mais moi, je vais poursuivre la question avec mon homologue, le sous-ministre de M. Murray.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je vous remercie. Lorsque vous demandez si une telle étude existe, si vous pourriez partager la réponse avec le comité, s'il vous plaît.

L'engagement que le ministre des Collèges et Universités a fait, est-ce que c'est un engagement de regarder l'impact du 30 % ou un engagement de regarder l'impact d'avoir annulé la bourse aux Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes? C'est quoi son engagement, exactement?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Son engagement, c'était que, bon, cette réduction-là de 30 % va être revue, et puis, en même temps, il va revoir aussi l'impact de l'élimination des 1 500 \$ une fois sur quatre ans aux étudiants méritants.

1030

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, est-ce qu'on peut s'attendre, lorsque la revue va être faite de l'effet du—cela a un nom, le 30 %; je ne me souviens plus de comment ça s'appelle, mais on va l'appeler le 30 %. Lorsque l'impact du 30 % de rabais va être fait, on peut s'attendre à ce que dans cette revue-là on regarde l'impact spécifique sur les étudiants franco-ontariens et franco-ontariennes?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est ce qu'il m'a dit.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Puis, est-ce qu'on sait quand est-ce que cette revue-là va être faite?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Il m'a dit que ça serait fait d'ici la fin de l'année. On a mis en place le 30 %, alors on veut laisser passer une année et ils vont revoir cette mesure-là.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, le 30 % a commencé le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier. On pourrait s'attendre à ce que—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Au printemps prochain, on fait cette revue-là.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Au printemps prochain? OK.

Vous avez mentionné que vous aviez accepté de rencontrer la FESFO et que le ministre des Collèges et Universités a accepté de rencontrer la FESFO également. Les gens qui ne sont pas membres de la FESFO, c'est-à-dire tous les étudiants qui ont bénéficié de cette bourse-là mais qui ne sont plus étudiants maintenant—ils sont sur le marché du travail, la vie a continué, etc.—ces gens-là, comment peuvent-ils se faire entendre et comment peuvent-ils partager leur expérience de ce que cela a voulu dire pour eux autres, cette bourse-là?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ils peuvent le faire, bien sûr, à travers la FESFO, à travers les associations d'étudiants, et en communiquant leurs inquiétudes au ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités. Je ne sais pas la façon dont le ministère de la Formation



et des Collèges et Universités va faire la revue. C'est important qu'ils expriment leurs inquiétudes, et la décision de consulter ou de faire l'analyse revient à ce ministère-là.

Puis vous savez aussi qu'on a créé un poste de sous-ministre adjoint qui est bicéphale, qui se rapporte au ministère de l'Éducation et qui se rapporte au ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités. Alors, moi, j'encouragerais les étudiants à faire part à cette nouvelle entité. Mais moi, comme députée, je rencontre mes étudiants, je reçois aussi leurs préoccupations.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Du côté de votre ministère, est-ce que vous allez porter conseil ou donner des suggestions à savoir comment cette revue-là devrait être faite, ou vraiment vous allez l'accepter peu importe ce qu'ils font?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Bien, quand les ministères font des consultations, on essaie aussi de leur suggérer des façons dont on consulte la communauté francophone parce que, comme conseillère municipale, je voyais qu'on devait avoir une approche différente lorsqu'on consultait ou on développait des programmes pour les francophones. Alors, c'est ce que j'ai essayé d'amener ici depuis que je suis ministre, de conseiller mes collègues. Est-ce que je les conseille dans les menus détails? Non. Mais lorsqu'il y a des problèmes qui font surface, oui, je ne suis pas—je cherche le terme—chiche de mes conseils.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça fait une demi-heure?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Ça fait 20 minutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça passe donc vite.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Vous avez des questions excellentes. Donc, avant qu'on ne continue, il y a une demande pour une petite pause de 10 minutes. If everyone is agreeable to a 10-minute break, we can do that. Good. We will recess for 10 minutes.

*The committee recessed from 1035 to 1046.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Okay, we will resume committee hearings with the ministry of francophone affairs. It is now time for the government side. You'll have 20 minutes, starting with Mr. Craitor.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Minister, I have a couple of questions I want to ask you. They're very poignant questions, significant questions.

First—all joking aside—I'm really pleased, and I had a couple of calls from my riding, because I was mentioning that this was one of the agencies that had been called to estimates. I say it in all sincerity because the people who called me said they were pleased to see that, for first the time, it's in one of the committees, and it shows that the government has an interest in the importance of francophones.

My riding of Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake is not designated; it's not quite that active in the francophone community, but in Welland it is. I have a very close relationship with the Welland community; I

always have for years. In fact, I used to work for the unemployment insurance office. I remember, back then, the government of Canada designated that area as a francophone area and provided the services at the federal level, so as an employee there, I was quite familiar with it.

There were two things I wanted to ask you. Number one, it caught my attention—it's not in my notes that have been given to me to ask you this question, but I'm going to anyway—when you mentioned the Niagara region. You mentioned that there was a request, and I'd heard and I knew that there was a request to have that area designated—a specific area of the Niagara region. I'm just wondering if you or your deputy minister could elaborate on that for me so people back home can hear where and how that's moving along.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes. I'm going to ask my staff to elaborate on that. Yes, we have three requests, and Niagara is one of the francophone groups who would like to see their region be designated. The Office of Francophone Affairs is supporting them in their work towards the designation.

What we offer, also, at the request of some MPPs, if they want to have more information and details about how to go about the designation, we do—I've met with at least two or three MPPs where there was a request in their area. We've received a letter from the francophone community in the Niagara region, and I'm going to ask Paul and Daniel to elaborate on that.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Yes, Mr. Craitor, thanks very much for the question. One thing we have indicated to the groups in each of the three regions where we've had inquiries is how important it is to get explicit letters of support from their MPPs.

In some cases, we've had inquiries from members who would be affected, and they didn't know what a designation meant. Helping them understand what the French Language Services Act is and where it has an impact and where it doesn't I think is important.

The most important thing to bear in mind, if I may, is that it's the provincial level of government. It doesn't mean that, all of a sudden, the towns are officially bilingual and the municipal services have to be offering—and all the public servants need to become bilingual. That's not the case. That's one of the myths that I think it's important to people help understand.

What it does mean is that the services offered by the government, the ServiceOntario desks, Employment Ontario, as well as the CCACs, for instance, will be obligated to provide services in French. An important fact, as well, is that time is given to make the transition. It isn't that cabinet decides, and then the next day this all must be available; there's a three-year period.

To Madame Meilleur's earlier point, the normal cycle of new hires is part of what one can take advantage of with the window, as well as changing signage for ServiceOntario desks. It says, "Bilingual services available," the signs are in both languages; that sort of thing needs to

occur, and it takes a bit of time. We try to do it in the normal cycle of renewal of these kinds of things.

But the critical thing is support from the local MPPs. We've made that clear to the groups, and, as we understand, they're doing that outreach, as I infer they're doing it in your case. We stand at the ready to help with briefings. Part of our technical work, as it were, is to assess current capacity of the regional offices of the Ontario government to provide services in French: how many bilingual staff do they have, that sort of thing.

Daniel, I don't know if you have some further things to add.

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** The only thing I would add, because that's all absolutely correct, is that in the Niagara region, the city of Welland and the town of Port Colborne—I'm not sure if those are the right ways to call them—Port Colborne and Welland are already designated under the French Language Services Act. Francophones living in those two municipalities have a right to access their government services in French.

By happenstance, most of the government of Ontario's offices happen to be in St. Catharines, so those offices have to have the capacity to deliver those services to the people of Welland and Port Colborne. In fact, a lot of the Niagara region, right now, already has a very good infrastructure capacity to conform with the French Language Services Act, but the rest of the region of Niagara does not have the population levels, historically, that we used as a criteria to achieve that. As the deputy mentioned and the minister mentioned, we're working with them to try to support their application for designation.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** So when it goes through this process, as you said, because some parts of Niagara don't meet the criteria—and I think you mentioned earlier, Minister, that you're trying to work in areas where there may be an opportunity for that to be considered. Does it take four, five or six years—I'm just kind of curious now—in order for the Niagara region to become designated? Is that a very lengthy process?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** In the case of Kingston, it took a couple of years to rally the community support and make sure that everyone understood what it was they were asking for. Once cabinet took the decision, it was three years to full implementation. That's how long it took. These are grassroots organizations, typically volunteers, and what the government is looking for is a clear indication of community support. There's a desire to avoid divisiveness through misunderstandings, so making sure people know what it is that's being asked for, and the government has the capacity to do it.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** So within the region, then, it would be looking for endorsement or support from the four members that are out there? That's what you'd look at? That covers the entire region. Okay.

The other thing was, and you may have already touched on some of this, and that was the benefits, the benefits, say for the Niagara region, to have this designation. One is, I clearly understand those are the services that are going to be provided by the province, our

services. Are there other benefits of having that designation? I've had some people come to me and say, "If you have that designation"—they think it has a benefit in terms of, the Niagara region is known for its tourism because of Niagara Falls, because of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Welland. We all have very special tourist opportunities. Would that help enhance it, in your opinion?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** That's a good question. For example, there are a lot of wineries in your area, and one of the owners came to me and said, "You know, we have difficulty attracting workers from France"—who are experts in wines—"because we don't have this service or that service." At the time, he was talking about a French school.

People leave their country to come here. It's like in Alberta right now: They are trying to attract workers from New Brunswick and from Quebec—but they have to build a lot more French schools because the workers wouldn't want to move there if there is no school for their kids. It was the same thing for this winery owner. He said, "Is there anything you can do to improve that?" I said, "We're always looking at building more schools." I'm sure that there is a francophone school now in your area, but at the time—that's one example.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** That's it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** You're welcome.

**M. Grant Crack:** Bon matin, madame la Ministre. Monsieur Genest, monsieur Cayen, bienvenue.

Je suis fier d'être député provincial pour une circonscription dans l'Est de l'Ontario, premièrement. La population parle français; 70 % sont francophones.

I'm just saying that I represent a riding in eastern Ontario, Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. It's about 70% francophone. It's a very unique riding. C'est vraiment unique.

Comme M. Leone a dit, l'Office des affaires francophones a un budget de cinq millions de dollars par année. Ce n'est pas un grand montant dans le grand budget provincial, mais en même temps, les services pour les francophones sont vraiment importants dans la province.

Our riding is completely designated, so I'm pretty honoured to be able to serve a riding that from one end to the other is designated. I know we have many pockets across the province that are designated.

I think it's important that we bring francophone affairs to the estimates committee. As Mr. Craiton has indicated, there's not a lot of exposure, but there are many, many municipalities, many communities, many pockets right across the province of French-speaking Ontarians who have contributed greatly to Canada and to the province of Ontario. I think the way the minister and staff have answered some of the questions here today, it's great to get the exposure out there, to let the people of Ontario know that this government is committed to promoting—not only protecting, but promoting—French-language services right across the province.



Premièrement, madame la Ministre, j'ai une question pour toi. L'Office des affaires francophones est en train de faire une étude sur les habitudes médiatiques des francophones. Pourquoi une telle étude, et qu'implique-t-elle?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Merci. Premièrement, si vous ne le savez pas déjà, le député Crack est l'adjoint parlementaire à l'Office des affaires francophones.

Je pense que c'est historique, en tout cas depuis 2003, qu'on a maintenant un adjoint parlementaire aux affaires francophones. Alors, merci d'avoir accepté cette position. **1100**

Cette étude-là pour l'habitude des médias—premièrement, pour nous, c'est très important de communiquer avec les francophones, et de bien communiquer avec les francophones. Pour pouvoir ce faire, on doit connaître leurs habitudes. Qu'est-ce qu'ils lisent? Est-ce que c'est via l'Internet? Est-ce que c'est le journal communautaire? Est-ce que c'est les grands médias de Toronto? Alors, on doit savoir quelles sont leurs habitudes pour pouvoir bien communiquer avec eux. C'est important, premièrement, de faire connaître les programmes et les services qui sont offerts par le gouvernement de l'Ontario, et deuxièmement, de les informer pour tout événement qui peut avoir lieu, que ce soit dans le domaine de la santé ou dans le domaine de l'éducation. Alors, comment peut-on mieux communiquer avec eux? Il faut connaître leurs habitudes.

Alors, on s'est joint à TFO. Comme je vous ai démontré, tout au long du budget on a essayé de sauver de l'argent, alors, souvent on se joint—on s'est joint à Trillium pour faire l'étude des francophones. Pour étudier leurs habitudes de communication, on se joint à TFO. Je vais demander à mon sous-ministre, M. Genest, de nous dire ce qu'on a fait et revenir jusqu'aujourd'hui.

**M. Paul Genest:** Oui, bien sûr. Monsieur Crack, merci pour la question.

La décision de faire cette étude, c'était une réponse à une étude, principalement, qui a été faite par le commissaire, M. Boileau, concernant la radio communautaire en Ontario. Ce réseau—franchement, il y a des défis. Dans le passé, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a aidé ce réseau, mais pas à présent.

Mais avant de prendre la décision de faire des choses, de créer des programmes, il faut mieux comprendre les habitudes médiatiques des francophones, particulièrement parmi les jeunes—comment mieux communiquer avec eux, et quels sont les services qu'ils utilisent maintenant. Est-ce que c'est l'Internet, TFO, Radio-Canada, les journaux? Quelles sont leurs habitudes?

TFO est notre partenaire dans cette étude. Pour eux, c'est bien utile parce que maintenant, dans leur vision, ils aimeraient appuyer la communauté, pas seulement par le biais de la télévision, mais d'une façon multimédia. Alors, ils sont partenaires avec nous. Après cette étude, nous serons dans une meilleure position pour décider quelle est la meilleure façon de communiquer et quelles sont les meilleures opportunités de communiquer avec la communauté et d'encourager son épanouissement en

utilisant les médias. Alors, c'est la raison pour laquelle on fait ça.

On a déjà parlé de l'accord Canada-Ontario, et ça, c'est un exemple. Nous, l'Office, avec l'appui du fédéral, avons utilisé l'argent, 25 000 \$, pour appuyer notre partie de cette étude; on a utilisé l'argent du fédéral pour ça.

Daniel, ça va prendre combien de temps pour compléter cette étude?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** L'étude est presque complète. Il y a eu un sondage de 500 personnes au téléphone. Ça a été augmenté par un sondage en ligne aussi. On a travaillé un peu avec la fédération des jeunes, la FESFO, pour essayer de rejoindre les jeunes. C'est presque terminé sur le terrain, donc on va en faire l'analyse. L'étude devrait être prête fin été, début automne.

**M. Grant Crack:** Puis une autre chose : dans le futur, il y a une grande célébration qui vient, le 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la présence du français en Ontario. Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire pour cette célébration?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Excellent. En fait, ça fait un bout de temps que l'on prépare, qu'on a des discussions avec la communauté de ce qu'on fait pour l'arrivée. On sait tous que Champlain est arrivé à Québec, et puis il y a eu de grandes célébrations en 2008. Ça a connu un succès extraordinaire à Québec, les 400 ans depuis l'arrivée de Champlain, et ça a été, du point de vue économique, une aide incroyable. Il y a eu des touristes. Ça a renversé toutes les études qu'ils avaient faites; ils ne pensaient pas qu'il y aurait autant de touristes. Toutes les grandes compagnies ont fait leur réunion annuelle à Québec. Les associations ont fait leur réunion à Québec. On ne pouvait pas louer une voiture ou avoir une chambre d'hôtel jusqu'à la fin de l'été.

Alors, pas seulement pour ça, mais on sait que Champlain a joué un rôle important dans l'Ontario. Champlain est venu à quelques reprises, et il a laissé aussi son fils adoptif, Étienne Brûlé, ici à Toronto. Et il y a des livres—en fait, je vous encourage, si vous ne l'avez pas déjà fait, de lire Champlain's Dream, qui a été écrit par un professeur de Harvard. Ce n'est pas juste des racontars et des photos; il a écrit ce livre-là à partir des écrits de Champlain.

Alors, oui, on va faire la commémoration des faits de l'arrivée de Champlain en 2015. On aurait pu le faire un peu plus tôt parce que, comme je le disais, il est venu à quelques reprises, mais on n'était pas prêt parce que ça demande des préparations. Alors, on aurait pu le faire en 2013; c'était un petit peu trop rapide, mais en 2015—puis, on veut aussi faire la publicité en même temps qu'on fait la publicité des Jeux du Commonwealth, parce que les gens pourraient venir au Jeux du Commonwealth, puis rester. On veut que ce soit l'Ontario qui fête les 400 ans depuis l'arrivée de Champlain—pas les francophones qui se font une fête, mais l'Ontario.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est terminé? OK.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Et on continue avec l'opposition.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Minister, I think one of the pressing issues that we see in the province of Ontario today is jobs. Certainly, it's an important factor. I think all parties share our concern with—

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Toyota is building a plant in your riding; 400 jobs were announced today.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes. Did you see it?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Pardon me?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Toyota.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Toyota just announced 400 jobs in your riding today, a \$100-million investment.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Is that a point of order?

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Just letting him know some good news about his riding.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** I'm sure the member can peruse the local news after committee. Let's stick to the topics at hand.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm not really sure what that has to do with francophone affairs, but, certainly, my questions are related to francophone affairs and jobs. I do acknowledge the story that the member for Brampton West has provided us today.

In your document, results-based plan briefing, 2012-13, key strategy number 3 is "Contributing to a stronger francophone community."

It reads, "Leverage key government initiatives." You're going to "work with ministries on the development of French-language services for the Franco-Ontarians community with a primary focus on areas such as health care, community and social services, immigration, economic development, education, and labour market development and training," which is certainly something that I think we have a great deal of interest in.

About six months ago, I would say, maybe more—certainly, just as we were coming back to session in February—I had a meeting here with some folks in Toronto with respect to employment resource centres and practice firms. There was certainly a consolidation of these employment resource centres and practice firms. There are quite a number of them—at my last count, well over 70 of these practice firms and employment resource centres—that have been eliminated or the funding has been removed for these services.

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Now, I noticed, in reviewing that document, the number of employment resource centres that have closed, that a number of them are French-speaking. For example, we have the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, Conseil régional Hamilton, which has offices in Burlington, Hamilton and in my riding of Cambridge for which the funding has been eliminated. We have Confederation College—I apologize if I'm going to ruin it—Manitouwadge; that has been eliminated. We have the Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières in Smooth Rock Falls that has been eliminated. What else do we have? I just want to read some of these into the record to bring them to your attention: Le centre d'alphabétisation La Route du Savoir in Kingston, le

Centre des service communautaires de Vanier in Ottawa, and I guess there are two offices that this centre has operated. We have le Centre d'alphabétisation ALEC du Nipissing in North Bay that has also been closed.

Minister, there's probably about 10% of these employment centres and practice firms that have had their funding removed. Does that concern you as minister of francophone affairs that these services that were provided by these employment resource centres are not going to be as close to the French-speaking communities that they were servicing?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Of course, when there is some change in the practices and there are some francophone groups who were already receiving money for training and are not anymore, my first question is, is this service going to be offered in French? The answer from the ministry was yes. For example, in Hamilton, the organization that was offering the service there was not able to offer the whole gamut of services, so there were pockets of service being provided here and there. Now it's le Collège Boréal, and le Collège Boréal offers the whole spectrum of services and training programs that needs to be offered.

There was a review of what was offered because they were going to renew their contract or not, so the ministry has decided to consolidate these services, and they assure me that the services will continue to be offered in French. I know you named two in my riding. I know for certain that la Cité collégiale is offering, and other organizations that have more capacity to offer the service. Also, they wanted to consolidate the program offerings, but with an assurance that training and programs will be offered in French.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The one that is in Burlington, for example, the first one that's on this list: You mentioned that it's at Collège Boréal, which is located at 120 King Street West in Hamilton. This Burlington one—the services that were provided to the French-speaking people in that Burlington area now have to be—they'd have to take a hike, I suppose, or drive to the Collège Boréal at 120 King Street West in Hamilton, which is about 15 kilometres away.

My question is, does it seem right to have someone who would be utilizing an employment resource centre—and usually, they're utilizing these employment resource centres to acquire skills and to find employment. We're asking them now to not just travel 15 kilometres within a city, where perhaps there might be good public transportation links, but now we're talking about commuting across city boundaries, where public transportation may not be as frequent and, if it is available, probably costs, so you have to take a coach bus or something along those lines to actually get there.

Does it concern you as minister that some of these folks who are trying to acquire more skills in an environment where the economy is not the greatest, where jobs are scarce—does it concern you that people in Burlington are going to have to travel greater distances to acquire the



services in French that they were previously acquiring in that municipality?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I think that this question would be better asked to colleges and universities.

But what I can tell you is that if this person needed to travel to two or three organizations before to take all the training programs that they need, now it's located at one place. There was a review done, an in-depth review, and good consultation done. That's where a decision was made that, for the investments compared to results, that was the best way to go about it, and that's what they have done.

For me, what is important is that the services continue to be offered in French.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The centre in North Bay that I had previously stated, which exists, does not list a suitable French-speaking location that's very close to it. Does that mean the folks who accessed this program in North Bay, in French, no longer have an employment resource centre that can provide that service in their language?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Again, I don't know all the details. I know that there is a substantial francophone community in North Bay. They have the services that would be offered. But we'll get back to you on that, because the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is better placed to answer that question.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** All right. Finally, if you could get back to me as well: In my riding of Cambridge, the one centre that was closed has moved to the YMCA of Kitchener-Waterloo. I'm wondering if you know how comparable the French-language services are between the French centre that they were at and the YMCA that they're going to. Would they be comparable, in terms of—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** We'll ask the ministry that question.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you. One of the reasons why I've asked that, Minister, is, as I've stated before, we see here that your ministry sort of spans a lot of different ministries. Since labour market development and training was one of them, I thought I would take the opportunity to ask those questions again.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, that's a good point.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** We don't often get the chance to ask every concern or question that comes before us, so I'm taking that opportunity to do that today.

I'm wondering if you can elaborate for us, in terms of labour market development and training, on what your ministry is doing with respect to achieving your key strategy of contributing to a stronger francophone community, with particular reference to labour market development and training.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** With regard to labour market development, first of all, what is important is to make sure that, since 70% of the jobs that are being created now and in the future need a college or university degree—for us, it's important that the francophone community, the youth, have access to higher education and that they can also afford higher education. I'm glad to say

that if we compare pro rata to the anglophone community, there are more students per capita that pursue their studies to college and university. It's positive and it's good to hear, because this was not the fact in the past when they didn't have the management of their schools. Now that they have the management of their schools, they put a lot of measures in place to make sure that students will succeed in school and, therefore, be able to continue to college and university.

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We also have put forward a program in primary schools, *l'aménagement linguistique*, which helps students to not just study in French but is able to see that they can enjoy themselves, they can have activities in French, but also, that they can develop a business or go to work speaking French or, like I said in the past, be bilingual.

We have expanded that program to college and university. They invited, for instance—I'll just give you an example—a business person from northern Ontario to go to a college and talk to them about being in business as a francophone. It gives them hope that they can also continue in their life being francophone or bilingual.

Those are some examples; and also the training after college and university. If they lose their job and they need extra training, the possibility to get this training in French—they can do it.

We've moved forward. One of the objectives of our last meeting, which we will all work on—not this one in June, but the 2011 meeting of ministers of francophone affairs—is how to support francophones going into business. We now have a national committee of francophone business people who work together and consult with the francophone community across the country to see what we can do to help them to pursue a business endeavour in the francophone area or francophone community—or not just for francophones, because their clients may be anglophone too, but the fact that they are bilingual.

Also, what we're doing is to publicize Ontario as an area where you can have a bilingual workforce. It's always a surprise for people—not just coming from outside of Canada, but other provinces—that there is a vibrant francophone community in Ontario.

All of this—and I don't know if you wanted to add to it—are just a few examples of what we are doing to help create jobs in Ontario.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** If I could add, Minister, to your comments, I think it's true to say that throughout the province the K-12 French-language education system is a real success story. It's growing, while the non-francophone system is actually shrinking. It's a function of demographics and immigration. The results are really extraordinary. As far as the standardized tests, they're doing extremely well. In terms of participation in post-secondary, it's actually higher than the anglophone population. Outcomes, ultimately, in terms of incomes, are also slightly higher than for the anglophone population. So there are a lot of successes to point to.

As far as avenues for the future, while we've got strong bilingual institutions in northern Ontario—Laurentienne, Collège Boréal; as well, in Ottawa, l'Université d'Ottawa, La Cité collégiale—in southern Ontario, we're less strong in terms of the offerings. There is Glendon College, which offers university-level programs, but it's only in the humanities and social sciences. Collège Boréal is getting a foothold here, but not nearly as strong a presence as it is in the north. And it's in the south that the population is growing.

While students may be doing very well in terms of living in French, getting their education in French up to grade 12, studies indicate that in the period from 18 to 24, one can be at risk of assimilation if you do post-secondary education in English. Langue de travail: If you're not learning your profession in French, you are less likely to continue using French in the home and to be living en français. I think the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has recognized that. They struck a panel last year, with Madame Meilleur's encouragement and advice on who ought to be on that panel. Minister Murray, I think, is going to be receiving that advice in the next couple of months.

The commissioner has identified, in a report he tabled very recently, that the offerings are very, very low in post-secondary for southern Ontario. I think we recognize that, along with Minister Murray, as an issue that needs to be addressed in the coming period. How can we build on the presence that we have—Glendon and Boréal—and other strengths that the other universities may be able offer for post-secondary?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** You've got 30 seconds left, Rob.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Well, I'll end on this to you: I'm not sure if you mentioned it, Minister, but we also have Glendon College at York University that also offers a French-language—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, that's what we just mentioned.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Did you mention that? I missed that, then.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, we just mentioned it. But it's just in humanities and social programs.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Right; okay. Thanks.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Okay, we will move to the NDP.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci. Moi, j'aimerais commencer sur un nouveau thème, un thème que vous avez abordé un petit peu lors de votre deuxième lecture, celle qui parlait des partenariats public-privé et du règlement 284 de 2011 qui prend des parties de la Loi sur les services en français et les applique à des tierces parties.

Dans un premier temps, je veux parler des tierces parties, puis après ça on va parler des organismes d'application délégatoire, qui est un drôle de mot, mais en tout cas, je pense qu'on comprend tout ce que ça veut dire.

Donc, dans un premier temps, les partenariats public-privé. C'est assez clair dans la Loi 55 qu'on vient de

passer qu'une des plateformes du gouvernement est vraiment d'aller vers les partenariats public-privé. On sait que nous avons le règlement 284/11 dont vous avez parlé, qui est en vigueur depuis le mois de juillet 2011, mais il y a quand même certaines inquiétudes face à ça. C'est qu'on ne connaît pas encore toutes les permutations, de quoi ça va avoir l'air, toutes ces affaires-là. Le concept est couvert, mais on ne peut pas s'empêcher de penser à Teranet, qui a été un échec catastrophique quant aux services en français. Personne n'avait pensé, quand c'était mis en place, que ce serait une corporation à but lucratif qui mettrait en place le système d'enregistrement des terrains, puis après ça que le gouvernement—en tout cas, personne n'avait pensé à ça, et je pense que le plus qu'on va s'en aller sur le chemin des partenariats public-privé, le plus qu'il va y avoir de créativité que le règlement 284 n'aura même pas imaginée, pensée ou rêvée. Donc, ma question, c'est vraiment comment on fait pour s'assurer qu'on ne sera pas toujours un pas en arrière.

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Avec Teranet, c'était clair que les services en français n'ont pas été considérés. Ça fait cinq ans que le commissaire aux services en français nous dit que, bon, c'est pitoyable, cette affaire-là. Tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes qui achètent un terrain doivent utiliser le service, et le service n'est pas disponible en français, peu importe la région, peu importe quoi que ce soit. Ça fait cinq ans de ça. Il n'y a pas eu d'amélioration.

Être un pas en arrière, pour les francophones, c'est risqué. J'aimerais savoir comment vous prévoyez rester un pas en avant de ces choses-là.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** D'abord, je veux dire que depuis la Loi sur les services en français, les tierces parties avaient l'obligation d'offrir les services en français. Ça n'a jamais été enforcé. Alors, lorsqu'on est arrivé au pouvoir en 2003 j'ai suggéré, fortement suggéré, qu'on revoie—parce qu'on disait que non, la Loi, finalement, ne l'obligeait pas, alors il faut avoir un règlement. Mais pour avoir une opinion juridique disant que oui, les tierces parties, finalement—ça pouvait être argumenté, mais ils devaient offrir les services.

Alors, c'est pour ça qu'on a passé le règlement, pour que ce soit très clair, pas de « if and but », que ce soit très clair que les tierces parties et les ministères, lorsqu'on transfère une de nos responsabilités à une tierce partie, doivent offrir les services, puis aussi, dans l'entente avec cette tierce partie, que ce soit clair aussi.

Comme il y a des tierces parties qui offrent déjà des services au nom du gouvernement mais qui n'étaient pas au courant lorsqu'elles ont signé cette entente-là, on donne à chaque ministère—parce que, comme je vous dis, on ne va pas jouer à la police. On travail de concert. Alors, on a donné trois ans au ministère à tout revoir puis s'assurer que c'est compris, puis qu'on offre les services en français.

Comment on peut s'assurer : bien, comme je disais tantôt, chaque ministère est responsable et chaque sous-ministre est responsable d'offrir les services en français.



C'est à eux de s'assurer, et nous, on doit être vigilant aussi pour s'assurer que tout ça est compris. Ce n'est pas que, à chaque fois qu'on transfère une responsabilité, on doit s'en assurer, mais que le ministère ait cette obligation-là. Puis le sous-ministre est tenu, dans son évaluation de rendement, à donner son plan de services en français.

Je ne veux pas toujours être à la remorque, comme vous le disiez, mais s'assurer qu'on clôt ce débat-là une fois pour toutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je suis bien d'accord avec les principes que vous nous avez donnés, mais en ce moment, le débat, il n'est pas clos. On a quand même un rapport du commissaire qui nous dit qu'il y a encore des possibilités d'échappatoires. Il fait quand même une recommandation directement à votre bureau pour s'assurer qu'il n'y aura plus d'échappatoires.

C'est un bon pas dans la bonne direction, le règlement 284, et je suis parfaitement d'accord avec vous que c'est à tous les ministères de le prendre en compte lorsqu'ils font des partenariats public-privé, mais on sait déjà qu'il y a des possibilités d'échappatoires.

Est-ce que votre bureau travaille en ce moment sur un nouveau règlement, un nouveau projet de loi, pour que vraiment toutes les tierces parties soient assujetties à la Loi sur les services en français? Ça vient directement de la page 48 du rapport du commissaire, où il vous fait une recommandation directe. Donc, c'est un peu un suivi à ça. Qu'est-ce qui se passe maintenant? On sait, on a le règlement; c'est un bon pas. Mais il y a encore des échappatoires. Comment est-ce qu'on fait pour ne pas se retrouver avec un autre Teranet?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mais écoutez, la constitution a été écrite il y a plusieurs années. On l'ouvre et on lui fait dire toute sorte de choses—la constitution, comme la Loi sur les services en français—qu'on ne savait pas qu'elle disait. Alors, de dire que la recommandation du commissaire, qu'on va éliminer toutes les échappatoires, c'est un voeu pieux, mais je ne crois pas que ce soit possible. On fait tout ce qui est dans notre possible aujourd'hui, comme, par exemple, dernièrement, on crée des DAA. Dans la loi sur le budget qu'on a votée, il y avait une provision pour que les DAA soient obligées d'offrir leurs services en français, puis avec toutes les modifications sur la loi, on pense que c'est encore dedans. Il va falloir vérifier si ça n'a pas été enlevé, mais je crois que non. Alors, on essaie de voir quand il y a une échappatoire. Mais si le commissaire—il a de bons souhaits, et pour lui c'est facile de faire ses recommandations; souvent les mettre en place, c'est un petit peu plus difficile. Alors, on essaie d'être vigilant. On met des « checks and balances » un peu partout. Est-ce qu'on va les éliminer toutes? Je ne voudrais pas prendre cet engagement-là aujourd'hui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Non, je comprends. Ma question était plus pour savoir s'il y a des actions en ce moment qui sont prises? Mais là, de ce que vous me dites, c'est vraiment que vous êtes en train de regarder si le règlement 284 va être suffisant et si on voit d'autres—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est ça. Quand on voit des échappatoires, on essaie de les corriger. Mais comme je le dis, et je le répète, c'est facile de faire ces voeux pieux-là. Je voudrais être capable de vous dire oui, mais je ne vous dirai pas oui aujourd'hui. Mais quand j'en vois, on les corrige et on s'assure que les règles—pas juste la loi, mais l'esprit de la loi—soient appliquées.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça—je m'excuse, vous aviez quelque chose à dire?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça m'amène à ma prochaine question. Il me semble que ce serait facile de s'assurer qu'il n'y ait pas d'échappatoires en les assujettissant à la Loi sur les services en français. Pourquoi ne fait-on pas juste dire, tout simplement, que lorsque l'on crée un partenariat public-privé, que ce partenariat-là, il est assujéti à la Loi sur les services en français? Donc, c'est réglé.

Je vais prendre l'exemple d'un dossier que j'ai suivi de près, les maisons de retraite. Bon, les maisons de retraite, oui, on a un système de plainte qui a été mis en place—ce n'est peut-être pas le meilleur, mais il est là—et il garantit qu'on pourra faire des plaintes en français à cet organisme-là, mais ils ne seront toujours pas couverts par la Loi sur les services en français. Ça veut dire, entre autres choses, que tu ne peux pas faire de plaintes au commissaire parce que seulement les organismes, les entités qui sont soumis à la Loi sur les services en français—est-ce que tu pourrais faire une plainte?

Donc, oui, on y a mis un peu de l'esprit de la Loi sur les services en français. Les gens auront droit de porter plainte en français à cet organisme-là, mais ils ne sont pas couverts par la Loi sur les services en français. Donc, pourquoi la réticence de tout simplement dire, lorsque l'on crée ces choses-là, qu'on les ajoute au parapluie de la Loi sur les services en français?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est une bonne suggestion. C'est plus difficile de l'appliquer. Si c'avait été si facile, les gouvernements avant nous l'auraient fait. Alors, ce qu'on essaie de faire, c'est de corriger les iniquités quand elles font face, et quand on crée ces agences-là, de dire qu'elles vont être soumises—bon, l'ombudsman veut avoir plus d'autorité, le commissaire aux services en français veut avoir plus d'autorité; tous ces gens-là veulent avoir plus d'autorité. Je ne dis pas que ce n'est pas à bon escient, mais on s'assure au moins que nos partenaires, lorsque la Loi—l'esprit de la Loi, c'est que quand on a à offrir des services en français nous-mêmes, lorsqu'ils sont transférés à une tierce partie, qu'il y ait cette obligation-là d'offrir les services en français. C'est ce que le règlement qu'on a mis de l'avant en 2011, qui est passé sous les médias et sous l'opinion publique—pour moi, c'est un des règlements les plus importants, puis cela est passé sans commentaires, sans reconnaissance—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Les lecteurs et les lectrices de La Gazette sont plutôt rares, étant donné que c'est le seul médium—disons qu'on peut les pardonner pour ne pas lire ça tous les matins avant leur café.

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Mais je reviens quand même—vous avez l'air de dire qu'une des raisons pourquoi on n'y met pas tout simplement « assujetti à la Loi sur les services en français », c'est parce que c'est difficile à faire. Je vais vous dire, est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose que, dans l'opposition, on peut faire pour vous aider? Est-ce que c'est difficile du côté politique? Ou est-ce que c'est difficile?

**M. Paul Genest:** Madame Gélinas, il y a, franchement, de bonne volonté dans le système. Je pense que c'est une étape importante de publier ces règlements.

Avant ça, si je peux, M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur—parce qu'il y avait des questions d'interprétation, et il y avait certains ministères qui, selon eux, n'avaient pas une obligation de respecter la Loi quand on fait un contrat avec un tiers. Alors, M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur nous a demandé de chercher une opinion juridique claire du procureur général. Ils ont fait ça. Ils ont dit clairement qu'on ne peut pas éviter les obligations quand on signe un contrat avec un tiers. Alors, c'était absolument clair.

À ce point-là, M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur nous a demandés de préparer un règlement qui a l'effet de renforcer ces obligations existantes. On a fait ça, mais franchement, il y a des questions quand même d'interprétation. Ce n'est pas une question d'un règlement vague ou quelque chose comme ça, mais certaines entités qui reçoivent l'argent du gouvernement, est-ce qu'elles sont des tiers? Est-ce qu'elles donnent un service au nom du gouvernement, oui ou non? Alors, il faut déterminer ça. Si la réponse est oui, il faut déterminer comment on respecte la Loi. C'est une question d'interprétation. Quels services sont obligatoires? Qu'est-ce qu'on doit faire? Quel est le minimum? Comment est-ce qu'on respecte non seulement la lettre, mais l'esprit de la Loi?

Alors, après avoir publié le règlement dans La Gazette, on a commencé quelques processus dans le gouvernement, comme M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur a mentionné ce matin. On a eu des réunions avec plus de 100 fonctionnaires des diverses ministères pour expliquer l'importance du règlement. On a des comités des directeurs généraux administratifs maintenant pour comprendre et développer des gabarits dans lesquels on peut respecter et on peut écrire les contrats d'une bonne façon pour respecter la Loi et être clair avec les tiers quant à leurs obligations.

Alors, ça va prendre du temps. L'impact final du règlement sera dans trois ans. Alors, on donne du temps aux ministères pour ajuster leurs contrats et leurs relations avec les tiers dans la prochaine période.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Bien, c'est un peu ça que je dis, parce que, nous aussi, on les lit, ces contrats d'imputabilité-là. Puis on voit le langage qu'ils devront offrir des services en français. Puis moi, je me dis, bien, pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas tout simplement dit qu'ils devront respecter la Loi sur les services en français? Parce que la Loi sur les services en français, c'est plus que juste les services; c'est le droit de porter plainte, c'est la représentation, etc.

**M. Paul Genest:** L'offre active.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** L'offre active. Donc, je suis d'accord avec vous que l'on voit de la bonne volonté. On voit qu'il y a du travail qui a été fait et qu'il y a des changements qui se passent. Mais c'est comme beaucoup, beaucoup de temps, d'effort et d'énergie y sont mis pour avoir le petit changement qui dit qu'il y aura des services en français. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas mis ce même effort, temps et énergie-là pour tout simplement dire : « Vous serez assujettis à la Loi sur les services en français », point final?

**M. Paul Genest:** On doit embaucher des personnes, n'est-ce pas, pour—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je pense que j'aimerais clarifier ici.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Vas-y.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est que quand vous dites qu'ils ne sont pas soumis à la Loi, le tiers qui offre les services au nom du gouvernement est soumis à la Loi pour ces services-là. Alors, les gens peuvent se plaindre. Ce n'est pas si ouvert que vous le pensez, là. Lorsque le tiers offre les services en français, il est automatiquement soumis à la loi. On a fait le règlement pour clarifier ça, pour ne pas que ce soit ambigu.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je n'ai pas de problème à vous féliciter pour ça—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je n'ai pas besoin de félicitations.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Cela a clarifié pour un certain montant, cela a clarifié les choses, cela a aidé, mais il reste encore une grosse masse grise de services public-privé, d'organismes d'application délégoire—it faut que je m'habitue à ce mot-là. L'esprit de la loi s'applique à eux-autres. Leur entente d'imputabilité avec le gouvernement parle de services en français, mais n'utilise pas le langage « assujetti à la Loi sur les services en français » que, dans votre règlement 284, vous avez réglé pour une série de tiers, mais il en reste encore pas mal qui ne sont pas couverts.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Si vous nous demandez si on en a l'intention, on l'a fait avec les DAA à travers le budget. C'est une—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** On parle de la même chose? Quand tu dis les DAA, parles-tu des agences délégoires?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui. Alors, elles, on l'a fait à travers le budget. Si, à travers tout le folklore qui s'est passé dans le budget, est-ce qu'il est encore là? Je ne le sais pas, mais c'était dans le budget. Alors, j'espère que vous n'avez pas fait des motions pour enlever ça du budget.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Non, je te le garantis, pas nous; on voulait aller dans le sens inverse. On voulait aller—dans le budget, ça disait : « offrir des services en français ». Nous, on voulait aller vers : « assujetti à la Loi sur les services en français ». Je peux te dire que « offrir des services en français » a été retenu dans le projet de loi 55 et est encore là, mais on n'a pas réussi à y mettre « assujetti à la Loi sur les services en français ».



**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non, c'est une tâche pour un autre budget.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK, mais quand tu me dis ça, est-ce que ça veut dire que vous êtes intéressés à aller dans cette direction-là?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Bien, on ne s'est pas vraiment penché à le faire. On en a discuté, mais on ne s'est pas arrêté là. On a essayé de corriger ce qu'il y avait déjà, et puis on va continuer. Est-ce que vous voulez que je prenne un engagement aujourd'hui?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Non, non.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je ne peux pas prendre d'engagement aujourd'hui. Mais c'est une bonne suggestion. Puis, comme je vous dis, le commissaire, c'est des recommandations, OK? Alors, c'est des recommandations.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame. Merci, madame Gélinas. On retourne au gouvernement, et M. Zimmer.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Minister. This is a question in English. I apologize. I can follow; but I haven't got the confidence to speak—but I'm working on it.

It's a question from the perspective of a Toronto member, a 416 member, and I just give some context to my question. In Toronto now, in the GTA and certainly the city of Toronto, the first language of 51% of the people is not English and certainly not French. My wife is an assistant dean at the University of Toronto, and three or four years ago she told me that the entering class now at the university—51%, 52%, I believe it was—their first language was not English and certainly not French. In the riding that I represent, Willowdale—it's about 135,000 people—for about 54%, their first language is not English or French.

In Willowdale, there's a Catholic immersion, a French immersion; and there's a TDSB French immersion, but that's it. I get the sense that awareness of francophone culture and the French language is largely a phenomenon in the English community.

People like me who have grown up in Toronto, grown up in Canada on the English side, especially in the 1960s in the Trudeau years and with the Official Languages Act, became very aware of the importance of French culture and French language. That's still the case in great swaths of Willowdale, but it's largely an awareness of the English-speaking population, the second and third generations.

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When I go out into the Chinese, the Iranian, the Korean cultures which represent about half of Willowdale, they just don't have the awareness of the importance of the French fact, if you will. It seems to me that over the next years—and I read all the demographics, the changing face and makeup of Canada—that the English-speaking cultures, languages, may drop down to 40% or so.

Given that the other ethnic groups—Chinese, Korean, Iranian, South Asian language groups and cultures—

don't have the same sensitivity towards the French fact, if you will, how does the ministry, or how do people who are interested in really developing and accentuating the French fact, go about meeting that broad, sort of almost existential challenge?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It's a difficult question to answer. What I'll say to you is, in Toronto it's not easy because the francophone population is very small, but for the francophone community—in Toronto the francophone population is growing. It's growing more than anywhere else in the province.

I will say to you that it's not an easy objective, to make sure that all the newcomers or other groups in Toronto and in Ontario know about the French fact. But I'll say it can be done through education, through culture, through different avenues, either to have a neighbour who is francophone and they get to know them, and at the same time they get to be invited to eat the meat pies and the turkey at Christmas and to listen to the beautiful songs of our Véronic DiCaire or other very famous singers that we have in the Franco-Ontarian community.

I don't know, Paul, if you have a better suggestion, but I realize in some areas in Toronto where it's either a very Chinese community or a very Indian community, that the majority there, to get to know the francophone community—it's a bit of a challenge for us to be known by these different communities.

Paul, do you have—

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Sure. We are officially bilingual by our constitution, a multicultural country. It's a fabulous distinguishing feature about us.

I think that cultural events are extremely important for reaching people. There's an annual Festival Cinéfranco that plays down at TIFF, so those kinds of opportunities are there.

I think savvy parents can recognize that certainly if one wants a career in the federal government, that if you want to be an executive, you need to become bilingual. Starting at an early age, the opportunity is there. We have a great French language K-12 system and we have really strong immersion programs, and this is an advantage. It's an advantage too for, frankly, being hired into the Ontario government. We need more folks for those designated bilingual positions.

The work that we do supporting cultural festivals, that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport supports as well—I think those things can make a big difference. While there were some negatives around the Olympics, for example, I think the organizing committee did a fabulous job of presenting a bilingual face.

I've got a new responsibility as deputy minister for the Pan Am Games. That is going to be critical. That will be a trilingual face: French, English and Spanish. As well, my colleagues at l'Office are working on the celebration of Champlain's presence here. What we do on that front I think is really important to publicize our history, the facts of who we are, what makes us distinctive, and to help new immigrants and new arrivals to Canada understand

what a great advantage it is to them and their kids to be aware of the bicultural, bilingual nature of our country.

I think those are the things I would—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Par exemple, si vous allez au Théâtre français, il y a les surtitres. They have subtitles at the Théâtre français de Toronto.

They have the subtitles now in English and they have quite a nice group of unilingual anglophones who go to the—or they may not be unilingual, but they don't know if they are going to understand everything. So with the subtitles, it does help. It also does help those who have a hearing problem. It's all in different ways, but I firmly believe that through culture, it does help.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Mr. Zimmer.

A very good answer. Une bonne réponse à une question difficile.

A good one, David; that was very interesting and a very good point, as well.

I just wanted to perhaps elaborate on a previous question from Mr. Nicholls concerning the budget. From what I understand, and perhaps it can be confirmed, for the last number of years and for the future, it's anticipated at about \$5.1 million and that the spike last year in the budget was—just to clarify—for, I believe, two different special-circumstance funding, and it went up to the \$5.4 million. I've had to respond and I believe the minister has had to respond to claims, as well, that we've experienced up to a 14% cut in the francophone budget. That is completely false, incorrect and somewhat misleading. Would you agree with that?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No, I don't agree that we have had a cut. We were lucky, although we're always asked to dig in and see where we can save money. I was very glad to have had some success at the table to not cut my budget. You know, \$200,000 may be a drop in the bucket for education or for health, but for my budget, it's very difficult. We do a lot with the small team that we have.

Historically, the budget went down. The budget was cut. I was expecting this question to be asked. It went down from \$4 million in 1991 to \$1.9 million in 1997-98. It was cut in the past, and it had a very negative impact.

I have to tell you, when I took on this responsibility, the Office of Francophone Affairs was a bit different. I have to admit, though, that the previous government had seen the importance of increasing the budget after decreasing it, and it went up to almost \$4 million in 2002-03.

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I guess every party in power has seen the importance of keeping this office not just alive but with some financial resources to be able to do the job that we're there to do. Even though we have not seen major increases like, perhaps, other ministries, the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner came and helped us a lot in paying more attention to not just complaints, but suggestions from the public. We have done a lot and we intend to continue to improve.

When I go to Switzerland and I see my friends there and their son is speaking four or five languages, there's no question about it, it's kind of normal in the young generation. I say that this fight about bilingualism, it's my generation, not our sons' and daughters' generation. They see the positive avenue. They want to go to work for a Chinese company, so they want to learn to speak Chinese. A lot of the kids are speaking Spanish, but now you want to speak an Arab language because that's where the money is; and going to China and working there, it's the same thing. It's nice to see that these barriers that our generation put around each other are disappearing in our sons and daughters, and grandsons and granddaughters.

**M. Grant Crack:** Merci beaucoup. Aussi, récemment, il y a une préoccupation qui était présente à Cornwall. Ça concerne l'hôpital et the potential for job concerns. Est-ce que vous êtes en position de parler de ce qui se passe là?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, it was a very unfortunate event. There's always some myth that people didn't get a job because they were not speaking the language or people were let go because they were not bilingual and things like this. I have to congratulate the board of directors of this hospital for the way they dealt with this matter.

As you know—you may not know—there were two hospitals in Cornwall. There was l'Hôtel-Dieu de Cornwall and l'hôpital général de Cornwall. Hôtel-Dieu was French and the Cornwall General Hospital was English. Under the previous government, there was the amalgamation of the two hospitals and l'Hôtel-Dieu became a long-term-care institution. But the recommendation of the minister of the day was that the Cornwall General Hospital should ask and be designated because now the 30% francophone population in Cornwall deserve to continue to have their health services in the language of their choice, so that's what the Cornwall General Hospital did.

After reviewing their employment process, they realized at one point that a lot of their departments were not able to offer services in French because in their employment process they didn't look very closely at that. So at one point, in order to continue with their designation, they had to make sure that the services were offered in French in every department that dealt with the public. I know that there were silly examples, saying that someone who works in the cleaning department has to be bilingual, which was corrected by the administration of the hospital.

As I said, in 2003, the minister, Tony Clement, supported a directive that was issued by the commission, recommending that if there was the amalgamation, they should be designated under the French Language Services Act.

I think we're not reading it in the paper anymore because finally, after the fact, it became very clear that there were a lot of comments and facts that were not really the right facts, so when it was corrected by the administration, it calmed down the public opinion.



It's always unfortunate when these things happen because it pits one group against the other. Cornwall had, in their history, a few of these unfortunate events, and we always hope that it will be the last.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I would certainly agree with you that it was unfortunate. It was in my neighbourhood, about half an hour from my hometown. We utilize that, as many of the residents in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell utilize the Cornwall General Hospital. Although Cornwall is 30% francophone, there are many francophones from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell that still go there.

I think that, as unfortunate as it is and what transpired, it brought attention again to the importance of the French Language Services Act in Ontario, because you don't hear about it on a regular basis. As I said, it's great to have it here; we're discussing it. It's an unfortunate circumstance that it had to be talked about as to what happened in Cornwall, but it just reiterated the fact that in our neighbourhoods in eastern Ontario—and I know there's Sudbury and other pockets—the importance of the francophones and their contribution to the area and to Ontario—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** And if I may add, in this unfortunate situation, not just the francophone community but the community rallied together when that municipality withdrew their \$30,000. A private business person came out with a lot more than the \$30,000, and the francophone community rallied—like I said, not just the francophone community—to help the Cornwall hospital foundation to get more money.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Good point. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** We'll move to the official opposition.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** First off, I know my colleague Rob Leone talked about some of the folks in his riding that are part of the francophone association. I too have an association, actually. It's called the francophone association of K-W. We talked a bit about the zoning request that they've asked for.

I had the pleasure to meet with, I believe it's Jeannette Reilly and Claudette McRae; they're both active members of the francophone association of K-W. I was most impressed when they talked about their early years, coming to Ontario and struggling as francophones here in our community—back home in my community—in terms of the resources that were available to them at the time, and how far they've come, as a community, to make strides to have schools. I can remember her saying that there were no schools at the time, in fact, that they could send their children to. I know in my riding, I believe I have four or five bilingual schools. One of my neighbours' children goes to the school, and I think it's great that we have those assets, in terms of the educational infrastructure in our community that supports those families that want to continue with their roots as being francophones.

I wanted to get that on the record and thank those two for the work that they've done. I'm sure you've had a chance—actually, I think that they did meet with you down here at Queen's Park. Jeannette Reilly would likely be one of them that did have a good conversation with you on some of those requests, and I'm sure there will be continued dialogue from that active community. In fact, I think they're hosting some significant family barbecue event coming up, and I'm sure, if we're available to go, that we will.

Just getting back to the results-based plan briefing book, I want to ask you about how on page 4 you talked about a roll-out of French-language services, a communication strategy about the new, clarified policy regarding designated bilingual positions in the Ontario public service. I was hoping that you could give us more in-depth insight in terms of what that strategy is and how you'll be going about that.

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**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Thank you very much—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It could be for the deputy too, whoever.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes. I think I'll turn it over to the deputy, but just starting: In the public service at one point, there were a lot more francophones being hired to provide services not just in French, but in French to different ministries. Those people who were hired, a lot of them were the last ones hired. So when the government decided to cut public service, they were the first ones who were let go. There was a lack of this capacity in public service, so the secretary of cabinet realized that they were short in staffing to be able to provide services. Of course, if you don't have them coming into the system and the first ones to go when it arrives at the director level, at the assistant deputy minister level, at the deputy minister level there were none, or one, just to save face.

Anyway, there was an initiative put forward by the secretary of cabinet at the time with the support, of course, of the Office of Francophone Affairs to look at: What can we do to correct this situation? There was work done, and I'll turn it over to Paul to explain to you everything that was done so far to have these positions designated, and if there is a promotion system or if someone who come from our immersion schools and are bilingual and wanted to occupy these functions or pursue their career, how they can go about it. Paul?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Thank you, Minister. To add to that, other problems—as things were getting under way in the last number of years in fulfilling our obligations on the French Language Services Act, one would find that ministries were expected to have a complement of designated bilingual positions. But sometimes, if you had a hiring challenge, someone might be in a customer-facing job and the ministry would decide to move them. They'd say, "Well, this is a bilingual person. We will keep the designation and it will follow them to a new function where maybe they don't need their French quite as much," and then if you put an anglophone in that position

and it was a customer-facing job, you really weren't making available the service.

Those were some things that we had to clarify. We also had to clarify what level of French is needed. So if you're greeting someone at a ServiceOntario counter and you need a level of French where you can say, "Hello, bonjour. Can I help you? Puis-je vous aider?" and then steer them to wherever they need to go, that's a certain level of French. But if you're expected to be doing a communications product, that's another level. Your written French has to be impeccable in that case. Identifying what standard of French should go with what level of job also had to be done.

These were a number of things that we did in terms of clarifying and promulgating a policy that now attains across the public service.

Daniel was closer to it, so I might ask Daniel if he has some further comments to add about the development of the guidebook on that.

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** No, not really. I think that just about describes it. It's to make sure that ministries understand why they designate positions and under what circumstances they should designate positions for services to the public; and that it's the positions to the service of the public that should be designated. The position should not be designated because a person happens to be bilingual, and that designation follows the person around the system. It is about customer service, so it's that position. Regardless of the movement of the person in the job itself—if that person gets a promotion and goes somewhere—that position needs to remain designated bilingual because that's a position that's needed to communicate with the francophone community.

It was just a matter of internal administration clarifying the obligations of the ministries. Now we're going to undertake a training program to make sure that people understand what that policy is.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I see. What would you say is the total number of public service employees that you would classify as being bilingual? Any idea?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** I believe it's 7% of the Ontario—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Five.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** I'm sorry, 5% of the Ontario public service. It's over 1,000, right, in our—

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** It's 5% and it's close to 3,000. But it's 5% of the public service positions. Most of them would be found in the regions that are designated, where the francophone population is concentrated.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Are you finding there's a void in finding people who are bilingual? Are there outstanding positions that haven't been filled because you just simply can't find the people?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** It depends on the region. It's much easier in the north and in eastern Ontario. Toronto can sometimes be a challenge—and you're asking someone to move to a new area, so it can be a little bit more difficult in doing the circuits.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** But nothing was brought to our attention as a major problem.

Another problem that you see: If someone is bilingual in a position, then they're not permitted to be promoted or to be transferred to another position, because they say, "Oh, no, we cannot." I receive letters from employees saying, "I'm stuck in my position because my manager doesn't want me to apply for another position or wouldn't give me another position because I'm bilingual," so then they'll need to recruit someone. So it works both ways.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I was going to follow up on the same line of questioning with respect to employees in the public service. You stated that 5% of the employees are designated bilingual or are bilingual. Is it the designation of the position or is it the people?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Yes, 5% of the positions are designated bilingual. There's probably more than 5% of the workforce of the OPS that is bilingual. I would venture—I don't have a number—it's a lot more than 5%.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** And 5%—that roughly would translate to 3,000, which means there are about 60,000 in the OPS?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Roughly, yes.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. In terms of the positions that are designated as bilingual, are those mostly the front-line workers in the OPS or are they middle managers also, some tiered positions in terms of who is designated bilingual?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** The vast majority is front line. There are some management positions, but mostly it's front line.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** In the criteria for hiring new employees in the middle managerial positions in the OPS, if we go to the OPS website, are there positions that would require, as a qualification of employment—I'm just trying to assess, I guess, how the government assesses their employees with respect to their familiarity with French and whether that's often seen as a criterion for employment in the middle managerial positions of government.

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** In a middle managerial position, very few of those positions are designated as bilingual. For those that would be designated bilingual, there are some tests, and as the deputy was mentioning, there are different levels of qualification in French that would be required, depending on the requirements of the position itself. If it's strictly to communicate verbally with other employees and so on, the requirement might be less than someone who needs to be fluent enough to be able to write technical documents, that type of thing, in the French language. The requirements would differ, and that would all be reflected in the job ad, the job description and that type of thing. It would be right up front, "Here is what we need," and the people who would accede to those positions would be tested.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I was reading here—again, on page 4, you've got that a priority is to develop a preliminary celebration program to mark the 400th anniversary of the francophone presence in Ontario. Will that anniversary be this year?



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**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No, in 2015. Champlain came a few times to Ontario, and we would have liked to do it in 2013, but when we came about—after seeing the success in Quebec City, we realized we should do something also, because he came and left a very great imprint on Ontario and left a good reputation here. We talked to a historian and he told us a few dates—I think there were three or four dates. I referred that to my advisory committee on French-language services, and they did their own survey and we decided that we will do it in 2015.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Excellent. I'll flip over to page 6 of 27, key strategy 3: Leverage key government initiatives. The first bullet point is health, but I want to move down because I know my colleague across, Mr. Zimmer, was speaking about his riding of Willowdale and the diverse population that resides in his riding.

I do a lot of our community outreach for our caucus and travelling in the GTA. We know that it's an extremely diverse community and the first language can vary across the board.

You've got here the development of an immigration strategy for Ontario that will meet the needs of French-speaking newcomers. I'm not sure if you can just speak to that, but I'm also interested in how or by what means your ministry is reaching out to some of our new Canadians to share with them the second official language of Canada, and Ontario, I guess.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** What the Office of Francophone Affairs is doing for that?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Yes.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** To reach out to other communities for them to understand—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** New Canadians: I don't know if there are any programs that your ministry oversees or assists with, perhaps, the federal government to promote the official second language of Ontario or Canada in those different communities coming in to Canada.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** What I can tell you is that we have a good program—not that we have a good program, but we initiated a program and a partnership with the federal government to attract francophones to come and work here in Ontario, or to immigrate to Ontario.

The phenomenon that we are seeing right now is—before, it was more like Toronto and Windsor or Ottawa were a phenomenon. Now we see the rural municipalities, the northern municipalities, where they need school teachers, for instance, and they cannot attract a francophone there. They need francophone school teachers, so they may work with the federal government and say, “We need so many of these professions and so many of these professions.”

When they arrive here, we try to welcome them as best we can because sometimes they come—if they come from different areas, sometimes they go to another province and then they come here after—they don't know that we have all these services in French; they don't know

there are French schools—so to have a good program to welcome them.

Now, like my answer to MPP Zimmer, we do it mostly through cultural ways. Let's say there is a francophone festival. We don't invite just the francophones to come to the festival. The invitation goes to all communities. We're starting to see more of the other communities in Toronto come to the francophone festivals or come to the francophone film festival. They come to the film festival, and at the film festival they announce that there is also a francophone film festival, so they know about it.

That's the way that we do it. I don't know if you want to add something.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** You mentioned, too, the immigration strategy. Where is it most focused outside of Ontario? Is it Quebec? What jurisdictions are you mainly targeting for the strategy? When you get francophones coming into Ontario, where are they coming from these days?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'll say that I think 50% of immigrants coming to Canada come to Ontario, and there is another large part that comes first, let's say, to New Brunswick or Quebec and then they come here after.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Do we have a stat on how many francophones actually are heading the opposite way on an annual basis?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Francophone immigration to Ontario largely comes from Quebec; that's the main source. But other than that, African countries are a very large source of francophone immigration to Ontario, as are European countries and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Caribbean countries.

But as the minister suggests, a lot of francophone immigrants also find themselves going to either New Brunswick or other provinces, but eventually find their way to Ontario. About 15% of the francophone community now is a visible minority as well. The demographics of the francophone community in Ontario are changing quite substantially in terms of diversity within the francophone community.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Is that right? And a lot of them would be relocating to urban centres like Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor, but now elsewhere in Ontario too? Where do you see a bunch of them—the majority—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** We see them in northern Ontario; we're starting to see this new phenomenon. But they were not attracted to—and I guess, also, I come from a very rural community, so immigration is not a fact of life. But now, they get used to immigrants coming to large cities, and they need this expertise.

In northern Ontario, for instance, they need engineers, so they will hire engineers coming from other countries, because they need engineers and these are positions that they cannot fill.

They go elsewhere, more likely because it's a need in this community to have this expertise. Then it has the phenomenon that they bring their families. They bring the people that they know: members of extended families. But it's a new phenomenon. It was not the—

*Interjection.*

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui, oui. Je veux dire que ce n'est pas habituel.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I think he's cutting me off here.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** I am going to cut you off.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** There we are; there's my bell.

Before we adjourn for lunch—thanks for your presentations—I'll remind committee members and committee staff that although I did not bring any baked goods, like the other Chair does all the time, I'm happy to say that there's lunch provided in committee room 1.

We will recess for half an hour.

*The committee recessed from 1228 to 1306.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Thank you, committee members. I hope you enjoyed your lunch. You're welcome, you're welcome.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Chair, point of order.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Point of order, yes, Mr. Leone.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I just wanted to state for the record, Chair, that although you didn't provide us with the baked goods that our Chair has provided, you did do very well with lunch, so I wanted to thank you for that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Thank you, Mr. Leone. I don't believe that's a point of order but I do accept your gratitude. I did bake that lasagna myself this morning, so a lot of effort and love went into it.

When we left off, it was to the NDP. Your rotation is 20 minutes. Madame Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci beaucoup. Je commence avec un de mes chevaux de bataille que vous allez reconnaître sans doute : l'indépendance de notre commissaire aux services en français. C'est quelque chose qui nous tient beaucoup à coeur du côté des néo-démocrates. On aimerait que le commissaire aux services en français relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. Pour nous, c'est vraiment un autre pas en s'assurant que les droits des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes seront respectés maintenant et dans l'avenir.

Quand je commence mon petit monologue sur ces choses-là, je commence toujours de la même façon : en vous félicitant, madame la Ministre, pour avoir mis le commissaire en place et pour la bonne relation que vous et votre bureau avez eue avec le commissaire et avec le commissariat. Par contre, bien qu'on vous souhaite longue et heureuse vie, vous ne serez pas toujours là. Sans vouloir vous souhaiter de malheur, on aimerait avoir un système en place qui va s'assurer que le bon travail qu'il a été capable de faire sous votre égide continue pour toujours et continue peu importe qui devient ministre délégué aux services en français et peu importe qui devient commissaire aux services en français. Je me rends bien compte qu'il y a une belle relation de respect qui s'est établie entre vous et le commissaire ainsi qu'entre votre bureau et le commissariat, mais c'est quelque chose qu'on veut vraiment mettre dans une

structure, une structure où on protégerait un peu le commissariat et le commissaire d'une ingérence politique, parce qu'on sait qu'en ce moment, tout le bureau du commissariat repose sur une ligne dans un petit budget de cinq millions de dollars que, comme nos collègues l'ont dit, est très petit, comparé à tout ce qui se passe dans le gouvernement—très petit, mais par contre, une coupure de 10 % ou 15 % pourrait vraiment mettre en jeu le travail qu'il est capable de faire.

On se souvient tous de ce qui est arrivé à Statistique Canada. À Statistique Canada, tout le monde pensait que c'était un organisme indépendant, et non, on s'est rendu compte qu'il relevait d'un ministre qui a décidé, du jour au lendemain, de changer les règles du jeu. La Loi qu'il est là pour protéger, on sait tous que c'est une Loi quasi-constitutionnelle. Il me semble que, dans l'intérêt de faire respecter cette Loi par les hauts fonctionnaires, par tous les députés, etc., que ce serait un bon pas à faire.

Dans son rapport, il nous parle de l'indépendance au niveau juridique; qu'en ce moment, il a été capable de demander qu'il y ait un protocole d'entente qui lui permette de demander des avis juridiques externes et indépendants. Mais vraiment, comme un officier qui relève de votre bureau, il devrait faire affaire avec le procureur général de l'Ontario. On peut tous voir, à un moment donné, que si les démarches du commissariat et du commissaire n'étaient pas vues de façon favorable par le gouvernement en place, il y aurait certainement beaucoup de place aux conflits d'intérêt, etc.

Puis, dans un dernier temps, il parle de son indépendance administrative. L'indépendance administrative, c'est vraiment—à chaque fois que vous avez changé de portfolio, il a dû changer de ministère responsable, lui et son bureau. À un moment donné, tu sais, de pouvoir compter sur quelqu'un qui sait ce que tu fais et connaît les ressources humaines, etc., et les applique de la même façon, ça rendrait sa vie un petit peu plus facile, et la vie de la petite équipe qui travaille.

Tout ça pour vous dire que, du côté néo-démocrate, on est en faveur. J'ai eu la chance de faire un projet de loi lors de notre dernière session législative; j'ai remis un projet de loi à cet effet au printemps de cette année lorsque la nouvelle session législative a commencé. J'ai également pu présenter des pétitions qui viennent de partout en Ontario et je suis contente de dire que les pétitions ne sont non seulement signées par les francophones, mais il y a beaucoup de francophiles et d'anglophones qui appuient un tel changement à la Loi sur les services en français. Et là, ma question, c'est vraiment, quelle est votre opinion face à ça?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Bien, premièrement, je veux vous remercier pour les beaux mots à mon égard, mais aussi vous remercier parce que vous êtes très militante dans ce dossier-là et vous êtes toujours très ferme pour l'indépendance du commissaire.

Oui, je pense que c'est une petite préoccupation du commissaire quand on change de ministère. Est-ce que je vais garder les affaires francophones? Je pense que c'est une préoccupation pour lui et d'autres. Ce n'est pas une



préoccupation pour moi, parce que, à chaque fois que j'ai changé de ministère, j'ai toujours demandé au premier ministre : « Est-ce que je garde les affaires francophones? ».

—« Ben oui, ça va de soi ».

Je pense que ça m'est collé à la peau et je pense que pendant tout ce temps-là, je vais demeurer; j'adore, de toute façon. Alors, ça me fait bien plaisir de le garder. Mais vous avez des préoccupations qui sont valables. On sait que, bon, c'est un petit bureau avec un petit budget qui fait un travail. Si je le compare aux autres bureaux similaires, comme l'ombudsman ou d'autres commissaires, et le peu de personnel et le petit budget et puis le travail qu'ils accomplissent, c'est incroyable; ça ne se compare pas.

C'est un bureau qui est très respecté, puis ça va avec la personne qui occupe le poste de commissaire, M. Boileau, un homme très respecté. Je fais souvent des farces. Je dis : « J'ai embauché mon voisin ». Parce que, oui, il habitait à Ottawa à deux rues de chez moi, mais je ne le connaissais pas. Je ne savais même pas son nom. J'aurais dû le savoir parce qu'il a une belle réputation au niveau de la francophonie, pas juste ontarienne mais nationale, mais je ne le connaissais pas. Le processus a été un processus très indépendant qui a été mené par la fonction publique. Il y avait sur le comité le président de mon comité aviseur, Guy Matte, et quand on connaît Guy Matte—il amène de belles collaborations dans la francophonie. On lui doit beaucoup. On est venu me le présenter une journée pour me dire que c'était le choix du comité et, bien sûr, les personnes qui faisaient partie du comité, dont deux sous-ministres, j'avais bien confiance qu'ils choisissaient la bonne personne.

Je pense qu'il a donné le ton à ce bureau-là. Il fait un travail exceptionnel. D'ailleurs, on vient de renouveler son dernier mandat pour un mandat de cinq ans.

Oui, je me penche sur ce dossier-là, l'indépendance, parce que, pour moi, il est indépendant. Je ne lui donne pas de directives. Je pense que quelquefois je disais : « Tu devrais peut-être investiguer telle chose. » Mais il est libre de faire ce qu'il veut. Ce sont des dossiers, finalement, qui ont—je ne dirais pas qu'ils ont fait de jurisprudence, mais quasiment. Le dossier des tiers, c'était quelque chose qui me préoccupait. Je n'ai pas d'experts dans les droits des francophones, mais dans mon instinct comme francophone, je ne pouvais pas voir que la Loi ne voulait pas aussi s'appliquer aux tiers lorsqu'ils offrent des services au nom du gouvernement. Alors, on en est venu—moi, j'ai dit que c'est un des règlements porteurs pour la francophonie.

Alors oui, je me penche sur ce dossier-là. Je pense qu'on pourra peut-être travailler ensemble. Il faudrait avoir aussi l'accord des trois partis parce qu'on sait que les projets de loi qu'on met en place dernièrement n'avancent pas trop vite. Si j'avais la garantie d'avoir les trois partis derrière moi—mais c'est un de mes objectifs. Lorsque j'ai été nommée à ce poste, j'avais différents objectifs; un était le poste de commissaire. Alors, ce n'est peut-être pas indépendant à 100 %, mais je suis d'accord

avec vous que, s'il se rapportait directement à l'Assemblée législative, la pérennité de ce poste serait beaucoup plus assurée.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Bien, ce sont de bonnes nouvelles que je vous entends dire, puis je suis bien contente.

Ce que j'en retiens un peu : c'est un dossier que vous regardez, c'est un dossier que vous considérez, et si le climat politique était tel que vous aviez—je peux vous dire tout de suite aujourd'hui que les néo-démocrates vous soutiendraient dans un projet de loi comme ça.

Du côté libéral, du côté de votre caucus, est-ce que vous savez s'il y a un appui? Ou c'est vraiment encore au niveau de votre bureau seulement?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non, je pense qu'il y a—je ne peux pas parler pour les autres, mais j'ai toujours eu cet appui-là avec le caucus, avec les membres du caucus, et avec les membres du cabinet aussi.

Le premier ministre est le plus grand collaborateur. Il appuie toujours nos initiatives francophones, quand ce n'est pas lui qui les suggère.

Juste pour vous donner un exemple, le commissaire a un petit bureau. Il n'y a pas beaucoup d'enquêteurs. On avait besoin d'un enquêteur supplémentaire. Je n'avais pas l'argent. Alors, le ministère de la Santé a dit : « Nous autres, on est votre gros problème. Vous faites beaucoup d'enquêtes pour nous. On va vous donner un poste d'enquêteur. » Ils m'ont transféré l'argent, qui est devenu permanent, pour avoir un poste d'enquêteur de plus.

C'est pour vous montrer la collaboration. Les ministères et les ministres voient aussi la valeur ajoutée de ce poste. Je dirais même que, à quelques reprises, la recommandation du ministère—je ne dis pas quel ministère—n'appuyait pas une initiative francophone, et le ministre a dit : « Non, on va trouver une façon d'avancer dans ce dossier pour donner droit aux francophones. »

Alors, je n'essaie pas de vous dire aujourd'hui que tout est parfait, mais je peux vous dire qu'on a beaucoup d'appui. J'ai beaucoup d'appui—je remercie tous mes collègues—du côté des initiatives francophones.

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**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je crois que de ce côté-là, le message est clair. Du côté pratique, ça veut dire un projet de loi qui modifie la Loi sur les services en français? C'est comme ça que ça se ferait?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** En fait, la cuisine là-dessus—je pense qu'il faudrait amender la Loi sur les services en français, parce que c'est la Loi sur les services en français qui a créé le poste de commissaire. Alors, il faudrait amender la Loi. C'est pour ça qu'il faut que ça vienne au cabinet—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, ce serait un projet de loi—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** —pas au cabinet, mais à la Chambre.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oui, un projet de loi en bonne et due forme qui serait présenté, c'est le seul moyen de faire ce changement-là.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, ce n'est pas le genre de changement qui peut être fait au travers d'un règlement de votre bureau?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, ça prend un projet de loi en bonne et due forme—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Parce que la création du poste, c'est fait par une loi. Cette fois-là, la loi était incluse dans le budget, dans la loi sur le budget. Alors, ça pourrait être avec le prochain budget, ou ça pourrait être une loi isolée.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Une loi séparée. OK. Donc, sans partager de secrets des dieux, est-ce qu'il y a un échéancier que vous avez en tête que vous pouvez partager, ou juste nous dire, oui, vous pensez à un échéancier, ou on n'est pas rendu là encore?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** J'ai un échéancier en tête que je ne partagerai pas, mais j'ai un échéancier en tête.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, il y a un échéancier, c'est un dossier que vous regardez. Puis, s'il y avait collaboration autour de la table, ça pourrait avancer assez bien?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ce sont toutes de bonnes nouvelles et je vous en remercie.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Bienvenue.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'avais—

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Sept minutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Il me reste combien?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Sept minutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sept minutes. J'ai un paquet de petites affaires. Je vais prendre mes sept minutes avant de rentrer dans un nouveau dossier.

Le premier était, je trouve ça bien drôle qu'on célèbre notre 400<sup>e</sup> en 2015. Je n'ai jamais compris pourquoi on ne le célèbre pas en 2013. Champlain était ici, Étienne Brûlé était ici, voilà 400 ans; ça fait 400 ans qu'on le sait. Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé pour ne pas qu'on le célèbre en 2013?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Bien, c'est la préparation, tout le travail qu'il y avait à faire. On a regardé—on avait le 2013 aussi, on avait toutes les dates, et c'était le comité aviseur sur les services en français qui, après consultation, a dit : « Je pense que c'est mieux en 2015. »

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Le budget pour ces festivités-là va venir d'où?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Du gouvernement de l'Ontario, du ministère du Tourisme, des différents ministères qui vont être impliqués—Culture et les différents ministères impliqués.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, on ne verra pas nécessairement une augmentation à votre budget pour cet événement-là?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est fort possible, c'est fort possible.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Que votre ministère soit responsable?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Parce qu'on avait eu un budget ponctuel, spécial pour fêter les 25 ans—les 20 ans, puis après ça les 25 ans—de la Loi sur les services en français. Alors, c'est fort possible, en autant que j'ai l'argent.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK, que ça vienne de n'importe quel ministère, on s'en fout, pourvu que ça marche.

À Québec, c'était super gros. Les budgets qu'ils ont mis pour les festivités du 400<sup>e</sup>, c'était dans les centaines de millions de dollars. En perspective de ça, vous voyez les fêtes en Ontario de quelle grosseur?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non, je peux vous assurer que ce ne sera pas du tout comme Québec, parce qu'à Québec, c'était tout l'été. Nous, ce qu'on prévoit, ce n'est pas ça du tout. C'est beaucoup plus petit. Alors, ce ne sera pas le même budget du tout.

Mais, on ne s'est pas arrêté encore à faire un budget. On a embauché une personne; ça fait un an et demi qu'on a une personne qui est dédiée à l'Office des affaires francophones pour s'occuper de ce dossier-là, pour avoir les consultations avec la communauté. Il y avait beaucoup de suggestions que ça dure pendant tout l'été, une fête ici, une fête là, une autre fête là, une autre fête là, une autre fête là. Moi, ce dont j'ai peur, avec un modèle de la sorte, c'est que ça se perde, finalement. Puis, moi, je me réfère toujours au Festival franco-ontarien, qui a toujours été un succès à Ottawa. Il y a quelques années, ça a fait faillite parce que le festival commençait là, puis arrêtrait là; puis après ça, il recommençait là, puis arrêtrait là. Puis les fidèles du festival ne savaient plus quand avait lieu le festival, alors ils n'y allaient plus. Alors, moi, je préfère quelque chose de concentré. Et puis, comme je disais, ce n'est pas les francophones qui se fêtent, mais l'Ontario qui fête les 400 ans de l'arrivée de Champlain.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, la grosse fête va se faire dans un endroit précis à un moment précis?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je ne peux pas vous dire présentement, parce que tout ça est en train de se travailler.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Puis, comment fait-on pour se tenir au courant de ce qui s'en vient là-dessus? Est-ce que ça va être sur votre site web? Est-ce qu'il va y avoir un site web à créer ou quelque chose?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je vais demander à Daniel, parce que ça, c'est de la cuisine.

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Oui. On est en pleine consultation avec les communautés pour voir la forme que ça va prendre, mais on envisage qu'il y aura la création d'un site web dédié au 400<sup>e</sup>, qui serait probablement rattaché au site web de l'Office des affaires francophones.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Puis ça s'en viendrait quand, à peu près?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Bien, on est période de consultation pour l'été et un peu en automne. Ça fait que d'ici—je dirais dans les prochains six mois, grosso modo.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. L'autre, c'est une petite question niaiseuse, un peu, mais en tout cas, ça fait assez longtemps que j'essaie d'avoir les coupures de presse en



français. Tous les députés savent que quand on arrive le matin, on a les coupures de presse de tous les journaux anglophones qui nous attendent, qu'on puisse faire notre travail. Il y a deux solitudes en Ontario : il y a la presse francophone et la presse anglophone. C'est comme si on vivait dans deux provinces différentes, parce que les nouvelles sont vraiment différentes si tu regardes les nouvelles en français ou si tu regardes les nouvelles en anglais. Ça étant dit, l'Assemblée législative a beaucoup de difficulté à avoir les coupures de presse en français, mais je sais que dans votre bureau, vous les avez. Est-ce que vous avez déjà considéré de les partager avec le restant de l'Assemblée législative?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Est-ce qu'on l'a déjà considéré? Je sais qu'on a eu votre demande. Ça relève de l'Assemblée législative; ça ne relève pas des ministères, cette demande-là, quand c'est pour tous les députés. Alors, je pense que la question doit être reportée à l'Assemblée législative, si eux, ils ont une façon. Parce que nous, ce n'est pas—les coupures, en fait, moi je les reçois, mais je ne les reçois pas d'une façon régulière non plus. Alors, on ne veut pas s'engager à faire les coupures de presse pour tout le monde.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Dans ce cas-là, je sais qu'avec votre partenariat avec TFO, vous regardez les habitudes médiatiques des francophones. Je ne sais pas si vous pourriez également regarder comment on fait pour faire circuler ce type d'information-là. Moi, certainement, je serais intéressée. Une fois que le rapport va être fait, est-ce que ça va être un rapport public sur les habitudes médiatiques des francophones, l'étude que vous faites avec TFO?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Oui, on envisage que ça va être éventuellement posté sur notre site web.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, ça va être disponible au public. J'apprécierais beaucoup si, à un moment donné—je sais que des coupures de presse, il s'en fait dans le milieu francophone, parce que, à un moment donné, je travaillais là, puis je les recevais. Comme députée, ça fait plusieurs mois que l'Assemblée législative travaille à essayer de m'avoir ça, et je ne les ai toujours pas. Donc, s'il y avait quelque chose que votre bureau pourrait faire—je trouve que pour tous les députés, il y en a plusieurs qui savent lire un peu, et même beaucoup, en français. Ça leur donnerait un différent son de cloche, parce que ce qui est couvert dans les médias écrits anglophones est totalement différent de ce qui fait les manchettes du côté francophone. Et souvent, des événements importants de la francophonie ne sont pas ramassés par les médias anglophones, mais c'est quand même des points tournants importants. La question que M. Crack a demandée ce matin a fait les manchettes de la presse francophone pendant des semaines et même des mois de temps, et, à part un article que j'ai vu à un moment donné dans un journal anglophone, ça n'a pas été mentionné du tout. Je suis pas mal prête à parier que mes collègues ne savaient pas exactement de quoi M. Crack parlait parce que c'est seulement les médias francophones qui ont couvert l'événement. Ils l'ont—

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, Madame Gélinas. Je m'excuse. Vous avez fait votre point.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Puis j'ai fini? C'est ça?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Tu as tout fini.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Bien, c'est ça. OK.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** On retourne au parti libéral. Quelqu'un veut prendre un tour?

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Thank you. I can't believe it's my turn already. This is great.

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Just a couple of short questions, Minister. One that I would be interested in and I think, generally, a lot of people would be interested in—because when we talk about “francophone,” naturally, we always think of Quebec. That's kind of just normal; it's a normal reaction. I've always wondered—and we've never had this discussion—is there a relationship between Ontario and Quebec when it comes to the francophone communities and the directions we're going in in our policies and programs? Is there a working relationship between the two?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, there is a working relationship. As you know, Premier Charest and Premier McGuinty began this exercise three or four years ago where, once a year, there is a meeting of the two cabinets. It's not all the ministers who are invited, but those who have something to share or comment on with the Quebec government, so we do meet.

I work very closely with my counterpart in Quebec, first of all as a member of the meeting of ministers of francophone affairs that we have once a year, but also in different circumstances. We have signed an agreement with the Quebec ministry in tourism, in culture, la petite enfance—children—and also, one was with the Ministry of Labour with regard to the mobility of workers, an initiative from Jean-Marc Lalonde. So we do meet. Also, when there are international events that they host as a province, where francophones are in the majority, I am invited and we are invited.

It's just an anecdote, a funny story that I'm going to tell you: Everywhere I go, I'm always introduced as the minister from Quebec. Even though they know on my CV or they know on the program that it says, “Madeleine Meilleur, minister from Ontario,” I'm always introduced at events as their minister. So I have to say, “No. No, no; I'm from Ontario.” That's just to show you that often, they don't know that there is a francophone community in Ontario. Yes, we work very closely.

We exchange, also, best practices. For example, knowing that we have an excellent education system—according to economists, we have one of the three best education systems in the world. So they want to exchange best practices and to speak to them about what is the reason for such success.

Also, in another area, let's say with regard to colleges and universities, if we need an expertise in French—let's say we need more francophone pharmacists, we need

more francophone speech pathologists—we have an agreement with the ministry there where they reserve, let's say, four spots in their universities for Franco-Ontarian students.

We try to work together, and they see also, often, their role as being not the big brother, but to help other provinces to be able to offer francophone services for their francophone communities.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Mr. Crack.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Mr. Chair, thank you.

Dans ma circonscription il y a une organisation, Centre Novas, à Casselman, qui fait du bon travail avec les femmes en particulier.

Qu'est-ce que l'Office a fait pour le programme de prévention de violence contre les femmes francophones?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Excellent question. Actually, this program should be with the women's directorate, but for some reason, when I arrived as the minister in the Office of Francophone Affairs, this program was in the office for—one of the reasons that they gave me was that the women's secretariat didn't have the capacity to offer this program in French.

So I kept this program, and as Minister of Community and Social Services, it was also part of my other portfolio, i.e., the shelters for victims of domestic violence, in respect of community and social services. It went well with my other portfolio—besides the fact that I have a keen interest in helping women who are in this situation.

What the office has done is they work with different groups of women to identify the need and also how we can help. Your organization in Prescott-Russell: You have very vibrant associations who are dealing with this unfortunate problem.

We continue to work in partnership with both the women's directorate and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I'm glad to say that since 2003, we have now two new shelters for women victims of domestic violence. When we were first elected in 2003, just to show the importance, that we pay attention to this problem, the Premier asked right away—at the time, Minister Laurel Broten was his parliamentary assistant—to go and do a review of the domestic violence portfolio and to come up with a plan of how we can develop this program and how we can bring help to these women.

As you know, this problem does not know any particular social class. When I speak to men at golf tournaments about that, I always say, "It may be your sister; it may be your daughter, your granddaughter; it may be your best friend; it may be a colleague that you work with, but it's the best-kept secret." You have to pay attention and you have to help these women in every which way to get the help. Of course, to get the help, the help needs to be available.

We developed a plan. I think it's \$80 million that we put in this plan, because it's not everyone who needs to go into a shelter, but we need to have options. Also, in certain parts of the province, with this money they also

developed programs for violent men on how to try to correct their behaviour.

With my previous ministry, what I was very happy to do was to open two new francophone shelters: one in Timmins, in northern Ontario; and one in Toronto, because as I told you, the growing population in French is here in Toronto, and they come from countries, sometimes, where they have a lot of challenges. The rules are not the same in their country of origin as when they arrive here, so now they know that they have an option and they have a place to go.

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We just opened not long ago a new shelter in Toronto. There are many requests, and we are always looking, when there is money available, to open other shelters. I know that in southwestern Ontario, they're looking to open one.

The last one that was opened in the French community was years ago, so I was very glad to see two new ones, especially here in Toronto, because it's not just the money to build the shelter—that's a one-time, so it's easier—it's for the operation. We have done that.

There are many examples where I can show you what we have done, different programs that we have done for women, with the extra money. We have a strategy and we have a plan, and that strategy and that plan came with money.

I have to say that the francophone community was very well served. For example, we have now a provincial line, Fem'Aide, where they phone—it doesn't matter where they are in Ontario—and they have someone at the other end of the telephone line that can help them and tell them what they should do, where they should go. Those are a few examples.

Every year, the office receives \$125,000, and we use that money for partnerships with different groups. Sometimes they just need a small amount of money to develop a program or to have a conference on this issue.

We help also the student groups, because you may think that domestic violence is just later in life, but often it starts when they are in high school. It's behaviour that they accept because they don't know that they should not accept that. It's a lot of education to the young women. We take it seriously, and we know that there is more to do and we will continue to do more.

**M. Grant Crack:** Merci beaucoup.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Before I ask my second question, I must say, I'm quite touched. I didn't realize how much we were doing in that sector.

I know that in my riding of Niagara Falls, we have Women's Place, that I've been involved with for years. I can remember, Minister, when that place first opened. It was top secret. You couldn't tell anybody in the community where it was because there was always this fear that the husband or the spouse would find out where the wife was, so they never wanted to share the location of it. Although everybody kind of knew it, no one would ever publicly say it.



Since then, now that you mention it, I had forgotten that they built a new facility. It's pretty sad, when you think about it, that you have to build a facility because the numbers are increasing. You're so right when you talk about—the way you expressed it: Language is no barrier when it comes to abuse of women. I'm just utterly amazed.

I visit Women's Place quite regularly, and I'll stop in just to say hi and get a chance to talk to some of the women who are staying there. Their stories are horrifying, when you listen to them. I always have trouble understanding how a man can attack a woman. Anyway, I'm getting off the topic. I just never understand how anybody can be like that.

I asked you earlier about our relationship with Quebec, and it was interesting to hear that we do have a close relationship and what goes on. But I just wanted to go one step further and I wanted to ask you about the international level, going outside of Canada. I'm aware of the fact that there's a francophone summit in Congo this year that will be taking place. I just wondered what our role is, or are we going to have a role in that summit, as a province and as a country?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Good question. I have been to every summit except the last one. The last one was in Montreux. Usually it's in an African country, beautiful places where it's very interesting to go. The last one was supposed to be in Madagascar and there was a security issue there at the time, so at the last minute they had to change their venue, and it was to Montreux in Switzerland. If you know Montreux in Switzerland, that's the place where you want to go. But I couldn't go because it was the 100th anniversary of l'AFO, which is the provincial francophone association. It was the 100th anniversary and the Premier was the guest speaker there and we were giving les Prix de la francophonie at the time.

Anyway, I thought about it and I thought I'd better stay here, but I asked my colleague, Monique Smith, who was the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, to go and to replace me. She was very thankful that I asked her to go and replace me.

This year it's in Congo. There is a question about Congo and if the place is safe to go to, so it may be possible that at the last minute there is a change of venue. It's my plan to go, but as a minority government, unless I take a couple of my critics with me to go there—

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Yes, take a couple.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** —I may have to stay. But we'll send representation and it will either be my deputy or my assistant deputy to go in my place. But I enjoy going. Even if we don't have a formal role, it's always good to have this dialogue with people from other countries and other provinces. Manitoba always comes with us, so we partner together and it's an interesting event to go to.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Thank you. Go ahead. David, do you have a question?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** No, I don't have any questions.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Well, in that case—

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Do you have another one?

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I don't like to hog the floor. I'm one of those Liberals that likes to share.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** But you're doing it with such grace.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** You have two minutes left, Mr. Craiton. I'm sure you can fill that time with something.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Two minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm glad you're back—yeah; good.

It's strange. I was thinking about it and I mentioned earlier that I worked in the federal government. I can remember when, within the federal government of the day, there was this whole concept that everything had to become bilingual. Even back then, I remember some of the employees were basically told that it was a requirement and many were sent away for up to a year at a time to become bilingual; it was sort of a requirement. There were a lot of concerns at the time. As time moved on, we started to realize there was a need and a service for it.

The reason I tell you that is because in my riding we have a number of parents who come in and sit with me and talk about their children. A number of them are going into French schools that we have there. I was thinking earlier, when you mentioned the fact—and I've sat with them and asked them, and to them, they see it as a great opportunity. They see being able to speak both languages being important. In fact, when you mentioned earlier to speak four or five or six, for European people—you're right. We have a lot of immigrants, newcomers from around the world in our riding, and many are learning English, but they speak four or five languages.

I'm just curious, because you come out of that background. I didn't realize when you mentioned that, that you learned English and French was your first. It's a difficult way to learn it.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No, I did not come out of—I didn't have that luck. I learned English because I had an English boyfriend. That's the way I learned 70% of what I know in two months. I recommend it. That's a good way.

But this aside, here in the Ontario government, we have this program for senior officials and for MPPs, and I have to tell you that it's so popular that we had to recently add money into that budget because there were a lot of MPPs who took the opportunity to perfect their French or to learn French, and there are different ways.

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I encourage all of you—and I know that you all speak a bit of French—to register. You can take your lessons over the phone—there are different ways. I know that you're all very busy but I encourage you to perfect your French, because I'm amazed; I heard all of you and you have a good base; you should not be embarrassed to speak it. I know we're more comfortable in our maternal tongue, but it's important.

Grant, for instance, who represents a very French area, sometimes he says, "I don't know if I'm at ease." But as

you heard him today, he's very good and the more he speaks, the better he will be. And you, Mr. Chair—

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** —you're impressive also.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** You should tell my wife that.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** You should continue to practice, okay?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** She has taught me some French for sure. Merci, madame.

On présente avec the Conservatives—en français, s'il vous plaît, Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Toujours, monsieur Chair.

Minister, I wanted to go over page 2 of 27 in your briefing book. Under your mandate, the French Language Services Act, the FLSA, you oversee the application of the FLSA and you also work with ministries and agencies to ensure that French-language services are available to the public in designated areas of the province. Then below that, you talk about leading the French-language services implementation planning process in newly designated areas.

A couple of questions for you, just with regard to the existing designated areas versus newly designated areas: Has the criteria from the existing to the newly created designated areas—the criteria for those designations—changed at all over the years?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, it did, for the reasons that I gave earlier. There was an unwritten criteria for designation of an area under the French Language Services Act. It had to be either 10% of the population or 5,000 francophones in urban areas. Those regions were all designated under the French Language Services Act. When they met these criteria nobody needed to ask for the designation; it was automatic. The designation would come through cabinet, and the designation would happen.

Now, since the amalgamation of municipalities, every time we have the Statistics Canada results, there's no other municipality that qualifies or, I will dare say, probably will not qualify in the future.

We looked at how we can answer these requests from the francophone population. The first test was with Kingston. With Kingston, the mayor wanted the designation, the MPP wanted the designation, the MP wanted the designation, the francophone community was asking for it, and it was not costing the government one penny, so we did it. It was a wonderful exercise. They had a big celebration the day that they received the designation. So we said: "Why not open it to other communities?" If all the stars are aligned, why not?

We have now three requests coming to the Office of Francophone Affairs. As we explained, we are looking at it. We have met with the MPPs because the MPPs asked us, because they had heard all sorts of stories—untrue of course. So they wanted to hear from me what was the process, how costly it was and all these questions, and we answered their questions. Now it's up to them. I know

that one of your colleagues, Christine Elliott, already sent me a letter of support for the Durham region.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Earlier I mentioned the three areas in close proximity to my riding, although they're not in my riding, within a few kilometres, though, just north-west of Chatham: Pain Court, Pointe-aux-Roches and Grande Pointe, those three. Would they be classified as individual designated areas? I guess the first question would be, perhaps to the deputy, are they designated communities or areas, and if they are, are they grouped as one? Grande Pointe and Pain Court are very, very close, probably within 10 kilometres. I was just curious to see, because if they aren't, what would it take, then, for them to become a designated area? It's quite a prominent area.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, I know. I've been to Pointe-aux-Roches to help them when they wanted to demolish their church. So I've been there.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You helped demolish the church?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No, I tried to save the church.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'll turn it over to you.

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Without the amalgamation and so on, we're a little behind in terms of how things are referred to. But in the county of Essex, it's the county of Essex that is designated—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Chatham-Kent—what are you?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm Chatham-Kent. That's correct. Pointe-aux-Roches, is that in your riding?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Yes, it is.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Forgive me.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** So if you want Chatham-Kent figures, then you might want to clarify that riding for them—although I'll take the Essex figures as well, just as a point of information. But for your riding, it's Chatham-Kent—Essex.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ici.

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** Yes. The municipality of Chatham-Kent is designated. That would include the former town of Tilbury and the former townships of Dover and Tilbury East.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** In your area, those are the municipalities that have been designated.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** In my area, okay. Tilbury, Dover and—right, because Pain Court and Grande Pointe are in the township of Dover. That's correct. Well, that's great news. So they already are; all right.

Thank you for clarifying that with me. But it's unfortunate that, from what I'm hearing you say, it may be a bit of an issue for future designations because of the way the amalgamation and everything else have gone. That's unfortunate.

I'd like to turn your attention over to page 5 in the same briefing book for a moment. I see a heading that kind of jumped out at me. I think we've found the A that might be missing in Ornge: accountability. You would expect me to perhaps add something there. You talk about the minister's provincial advisory committee. Can you



explain to me what that is or who that consists of; is it volunteers, is it paid; if there was pay, are there costs; and what their mandate would be?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Their mandate is to advise me on francophone issues. When I was appointed the first time, I was the only francophone around the table. I had my colleague Jean-Marc Lalonde, who was very helpful, but I needed help from an advisory committee. So we created this advisory committee. They also bring issues to the table because the membership is from across the province. There are people from the north, people from the northwest, northeast, eastern Ontario, Toronto, Windsor—different areas. They're able, also, to bring their issues and to bring the opinions of the people in their area.

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They are, first of all, very active in their communities. Their membership is for up to six years. The only thing that we pay is their transportation, hotel and food, but they offer their time and advice free of charge. It's very, very helpful. I'm amazed at the calibre of this advisory committee.

It's also used by other ministries. Let's say they put forward a new immigration program with a francophone component. They'll come and do the presentation before the committee and ask the opinion of the committee. It's a very, very strong committee. The Ministry of Health does the same thing, and the Ministries of Education and Training, Colleges and Universities. They seek advice from these people.

They're very balanced and have experience in different fields—a business person, a person who works with social issues, an educator, a university professor, a young lad from Windsor University—so we have very good representation. I don't know what I would do without them because it's always a pleasure—and the commissioner also will appear before them. Ministries will ask to meet with the committee and the committee will ask some ministries to appear before them, especially if there is an issue not just in their community but in their area, or perhaps a provincial issue, and they would like to hear from the ministry with regard, for example, to the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Champlain, another issue also with tourism. It's when we divided the province in different sectors—I think it's 10 different tourist sectors—to make sure that in an area where they have a French-language area designated under the act, we have a fair representation of francophones on that committee.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Is this a rotating committee, Minister, or is it a set number of people? How many would there be?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** There is a set number of people, 12 people. They are there for—at the beginning, you know, we had to give a mandate, one year to one, two years to others and three years, to make sure that not everybody will leave at the same time.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Sure.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** But it's up to six years—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** How often do they meet?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Once every two months.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, so six times a year—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes. At the beginning it was more often, but now it's once every two months. They meet for two days and they have a full agenda. I always go before them and give them a report of what is happening for francophones in different ministries and the work that we have done. So it's—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Based on your knowledge of that particular committee, what would you say, in your opinion, would be maybe the top one or two success stories that they've had, ideas that have not only been brought forward but also implemented?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** There are so many. First of all, they help me very much with the commissioner, to help me to convince my government, in a sense—or they brought this suggestion of having a commissioner forward; this was good help that they provided to me. Also, in suggesting to people to apply to the position: This person who came and is now our commissioner was well known by one member of the committee. She did suggest that. That's one.

The other one is also the immigration. We felt that the immigration ministry was very concentrated on anglophone immigration but had no plan, no different approach, for francophone immigration—how to welcome them and to make sure that they know all the services that we are providing. That's, again, a suggestion.

With regard to when there were the 10 designations, the 10 tourist areas across the province: When we put that structure in to make sure that the francophones in designated areas—that there was membership on that structure in that area, that there were francophones.

Education: For instance, we spoke about the lack of francophone services in southwestern Ontario with regard to post-secondary education. They suggested that the ministry would put forward that committee to review what is in place and to suggest a good structure that we could put in place to make sure that we provide this service in southwestern Ontario.

I can go on. The six—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, it sounds to me like your committee is obviously—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** They work hard.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** They work hard, they work together as a team; they bring forth very good ideas not only from their respected professions, but also from their respected designated areas which they represent. I'm sure that it's no small task getting 12 people together every two months, sitting down, discussing and coming up with action plans to determine what are our concerns, what are ideas for solving the problem, and then how can we go about implementing that as well. I commend you for that. It sounds like you're making headway on that.

One last question for you, and that is over on page 6. Your key strategy number 3: Contributing to a stronger francophone community. It's under economic development. As the deputy labour critic—your economic development statement is simply this: Promote the value

of the francophone factor in Ontario's economic sector. Could you explain that to me in greater detail?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It has two components. The first component that I spoke about is resulting from an initiative from the ministers of francophone affairs across the country. We struck a committee together of francophone business persons across the country to help us to figure out what we can do to stimulate or encourage francophones to have their own businesses. That's one component.

The other component is, we also work with other provinces. For instance, every year, there is a large international conference in Montreal. Resulting from that one, they have started one here in Ontario. It's not just for francophones. It's for francophones, francophiles, anglophones—different expertise from different parts of the world come together.

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What we do in the Office of Francophone Affairs is we draft a list of francophone business persons and we invite them to attend these meetings. We seek their input in what they would like to see or to attend, and what support they need from our own economic development ministry.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Does that include the marketing, helping them market their businesses as well, those types of things—all the components that go into, say, small business? I'm thinking of a gentleman up in our area, again, who has a small floral business. I'm just wondering, from an economic development—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** When these matters—because we often do it with someone from the Ministry of Economic Development. We refer them; we act as the liaison, like we do with other ministries, but we also do it with the Ministry of Economic Development.

Another example is, at one point, the caisses populaires—we know that the caisses populaires are very popular in rural communities. They had one issue with the Ministry of Finance. They were not able to—anyway, I cannot go into detail—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** I'll stop you there, madame.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Okay.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** I'm sure you can get back to that. We've got two more rounds, I believe. We'll go to the NDP now. Madame Gélinas?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If you want to take a few minutes of your next round to finish—your time from the next round, if you want to finish. No?

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Bien.

Je vais vous donner quelques exemples avec l'idée de—je crois qu'on aurait pu faire mieux, puis qu'est-ce qu'on peut mettre en place pour faire mieux? Ce sont des exemples que vous avez utilisés pendant les deux présentations que vous avez faites en début d'estimés.

La première, c'est que vous avez parlé des six entités de planification en santé. Bon, je suis parfaitement au courant de ce qu'elles font, comment, etc. Mais la genèse

de ça, c'est avec la Société Santé en français, une société pancanadienne; les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes s'étaient dotés de quatre réseaux de services en français : un pour l'Est, qui avait été là depuis longtemps, longtemps; un pour le Sud et le Sud-Ouest, Toronto et environs, vers le sud-ouest de l'Ontario; un pour le Moyen-Nord; puis un pour le Grand Nord.

Donc, quand les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes avaient regardé ce dont ils avaient besoin comme entités de planification de santé, c'est ce qu'on avait décidé. Ça avait été fait pour et par les francophones. C'était financé par Santé en français et ça nous a bien servi.

Arrive la ministre de la Santé qui annonce une semi-bonne nouvelle : on est prêt à en financer six, plutôt que quatre. Bon. De prime abord, on augmente. Plus de ressources; les affaires vont bien. Mais ce qui est inconcevable c'est, comment est-ce qu'on a fini par dire—quand les francophones avaient décidé ce qu'ils voulaient, on avait décidé qu'on en voulait un à l'Est, un dans le Sud-Ouest, un au Moyen-Nord, un dans le Nord. On arrive maintenant avec six, mais le Moyen-Nord, puis le Nord ont tous été mis ensemble. On n'avait jamais voulu ça, parce que si tu regardes la concentration de francophones dans certaines parties du Moyen-Nord—Sudbury, mon comté, etc.—puis tu compares ça à ce qui se passe à Kenora puis Rainy River, pour nous, les services en français sont beaucoup plus avancés que ce qu'ils peuvent l'être dans une région où ils sont très, très, très minoritaires.

Quand tu as des choses comme ça qui se passent dans un gros ministère de 48 milliards de dollars qui décide qu'on en aura six, mais la planification pour les services de santé en français pour tout le Nord va se faire par une même entité, comment est-ce que nous, les francophones, on peut se faire entendre? C'est évident qu'on ne nous a pas entendus cette fois-là. On en a six, puis les six n'ont pas respecté—on n'en a pas rajouté deux autres. On en a amalgamé deux, puis après ça, on en a rajouté plus dans le sud de l'Ontario. Tant mieux pour le Sud, mais tant pis pour le Nord. Je ne suis pas prête à l'avaler, parce que ce n'est pas ce que les francophones voulaient. Donc ça, c'est un exemple que je vous donne, puis je vous le donne avec—je ne suis pas là pour essayer de défaire le passé. Le passé, c'est le passé; on regarde vers l'avenir. Mais je veux quand-même, en regardant vers l'avenir, que vous me dites un petit peu comment on peut faire mieux. Donc, ça, c'en est un.

Un autre exemple que je veux vous donner, c'est la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein. Franchement, quand le gouvernement est arrivé, puis a dit : « Grosse nouvelle : on aura de la maternelle à temps plein et la pré-maternelle à temps plein avec garderie pré- et post-écoles. » Ça faisait 10 ans que tous les conseils francophones faisaient ça. Il y avait des modèles qui avaient été développés, encore là, pour et par les francophones, des modèles, vraiment, à la suite de ce qui s'était passé avec Montfort, Montfort puis M. Caza nous avaient vraiment démontré que pour survivre comme francophone, ça te



prend—en tout cas, tu la connais, l'histoire de Montfort. Je ne suis pas obligée de vous la raconter. Je suis sûre—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** On lui fait dire bien des affaires à cette décision-là en plus de ça.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mais, d'une façon ou d'une autre, ça faisait 10 ans que les garderies existaient dans les écoles françaises, que la maternelle à temps plein existait dans les écoles françaises, puis là, tout à coup, on arrive avec un modèle qui est merveilleux pour les écoles anglophones où il n'y en avait pas, mais pour les écoles françaises, ça ne marche pas. Les beaux partenariats qui avaient été mis en place avec les garderies dans mon comité—nous autres, c'est avec le centre culturel, qui offrait le programme pré-post, etc., bien, ça, on n'avait plus le droit de le faire. Il fallait adopter le modèle que le gouvernement développait pour les anglophones. Ils nous l'ont imposé dans nos écoles francophones avec des répercussions catastrophiques. Nous autres—ça s'appelle le Carrefour francophone, qui avait les programmes dans toutes nos écoles françaises, catholiques, publiques, etc., de la région. Ils ont failli faire banqueroute parce que le gouvernement avait obligé un modèle très restrictif de comment ça se ferait, sans respecter le fait que ça fait 10 ans—non, ça faisait 10 ans; ça fait plus que 10 ans depuis ce temps-là. Ça faisait 10 ans qu'en Ontario les conseils francophones faisaient ça et avaient développé quelque chose à leur image, ce que j'appelle pour et par les francophones.

Je peux vous donner d'autres exemples de ça, où la réalité et le vécu des francophones ont été comme ignorés par des politiques. Si tu le regardes à haut niveau, ce que la ministre de la Santé essayait de faire, c'était quelque chose de bien; elle essayait de donner une voix aux francophones pour les RLISS. Ce que la ministre de l'Éducation du temps essayait de faire, c'était quelque chose de bien; elle essayait d'amener la maternelle à temps plein, et puis des garderies pré- et post-école, etc. Tout cela, c'était des choses de bien, mais ça s'est fait d'une façon qui était tellement un manque de respect total de ce qui se passait dans le milieu que c'était comme si on n'existait pas.

Là, ce que je vous demande, ce n'est pas de changer le passé. C'est vraiment, dans votre poste, vous êtes là depuis longtemps. Qu'est-ce qu'on pourrait faire dans le futur pour que ça ne se passe plus, des choses comme ça? Quand les francophones ont développé quelque chose pour et par eux-mêmes, qui les sert bien, comment fait-on pour s'assurer qu'on va pouvoir garder nos acquis, respecter les nouvelles politiques du gouvernement, mais en même temps être respectés dans ce que nous, on a fait pour nous-mêmes? Je vous demande ça parce que ça fait quand-même longtemps que vous avez le poste. Vous connaissez bien les enjeux. Je ne suis pas en train d'essayer de démolir ce qui s'est passé. Je veux vraiment regarder vers le futur. Est-ce que vous avez des conseils à donner?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Premièrement, je pense que je ne suis pas tout à fait d'accord avec ce que vous avez présenté. Les entités de planification, ça a été après

une consultation générale avec l'ancien ministre des Affaires francophones, M. Charles Beer, qui est allé partout, et on voulait plus que moins d'entités. Finalement, on s'est arrêté à six, mais ce n'est pas vrai qu'on voulait en garder quatre. Alors, le sud de l'Ontario demandait, la population grandissant plus que dans certaines régions du Nord, mais on voulait s'assurer que tous les groupes francophones, les communautés francophones, aient un mot à dire dans la planification de leurs services. Puis, quatre, c'était impensable pour tout l'Ontario.

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Comme je vous dis, on en voulait plus que moins. On s'est arrêté à six, mais ça a été fait, ces décisions-là étaient prises suite à une grande consultation par Charles Beer. Alors, dire que tout allait pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes, ce n'est pas ce que j'entendais.

Alors, je pense que je n'ai jamais vu, puis ceux de l'Office qui étaient avec moi, lorsqu'on a annoncé ces six entités de planification-là—la ministre est venue à Ottawa annoncer les six entités. C'était la première fois qu'il y avait une fête comme ça pour un règlement qu'on venait d'adopter. Alors, les gens étaient très heureux, mais comme je dis, ils en voulaient plus que moins.

Il y a eu une grande consultation; ça n'a pas été pris. C'est sûr que c'est pas tout le monde qui a gain de cause quand on fait une consultation et on prend une décision.

La même chose pour la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein. Moi aussi, j'avais dans ma communauté des partenariats qui fonctionnaient très bien. On changeait le modèle parce qu'on faisait un modèle provincial. Puis c'était suite à une recommandation d'un expert qui avait été embauché par le ministère de la Santé, le D<sup>r</sup> Pascal, qui est arrivé avec ce modèle-là.

Maintenant qu'il est en place depuis plus d'un an, moi, ce que j'entends—en tout cas, chez nous; peut-être que vous entendez différemment dans le Nord—c'est que maintenant qu'ils s'y sont ajustés, le programme, ils l'aiment bien. Je parlais justement à la présidente du conseil scolaire, qui a dit : « Oui, mais c'est parce qu'il y a eu aussi un réajustement. » Ce n'est pas ce qui avait été proposé, puisqu'on le lançait en premier. Il y a eu un ajustement à un moment donné sous la ministre précédente qui a fait que ça a satisfait, peut-être pas encore à 100 %, la communauté francophone.

Alors, moi, la réponse que je vais vous donner, c'est qu'on doit avoir des consultations. Est-ce qu'on veut avoir 100 % de l'appui? On ne l'aura jamais. Mais ce qu'on veut—puis on changeait là. Le programme qui est arrivé par D<sup>r</sup> Pascal est différent du programme qu'il y avait, même s'il est basé sur le programme qu'il y avait déjà dans nos écoles francophones, qui fonctionnait.

Je connais très bien le problème avec le Carrefour francophone. Il y a deux opinions. Il y a l'opinion du Carrefour, puis il y a l'opinion du conseil scolaire, que j'ai écoutées. Puis, ce qu'on a fait, on a aidé le Carrefour; pas justement qu'ils allaient en faillite, mais ça devenait très dispendieux, ce qu'ils offraient. Alors, je pense qu'on

s'est entendu, puis tout le monde a trouvé sa part de gâteau dans ce qu'on a mis sur pied.

J'ai rencontré à plusieurs reprises le Carrefour francophone à Sudbury. Tout ça pour dire que ce que je veux, c'est qu'au moins on les entende, qu'il y ait une consultation. Est-ce que ça va se passer dans 100 % des cas? J'aimerais. Mais est-ce qu'on va pouvoir satisfaire tout le monde, tout le temps? Non, mais dans ces deux cas-là—le dernier, la maternelle à temps plein, bien sûr que moi aussi, j'en ai eu pour mon lot, puis il y a bien des garderies qui devaient fermer qui ne sont pas fermées, qui se sont diversifiées.

Je pense que c'est pour ça que ce département-là des garderies est passé de l'Enfance et la Jeunesse au ministère de l'Éducation. J'applaudis ça parce qu'on a du travail à faire aussi, pas juste avec notre maternelle à temps plein à l'école, mais aussi pour les garderies, puis du travail qui a été fait. Mais je pense qu'il y en a encore à faire.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je vais continuer dans cet élan-là. La ministre de l'Éducation, environ un an plus tard, a changé d'avis. Elle a donné plus de flexibilité au modèle de garderies et leurs permis, les partenariats, etc., ce qui avait existé pendant une décennie dans le modèle francophone.

Je sais que vous avez fait plusieurs interventions pour que ça se passe. Encore là, sans partager de secrets des dieux—rien de ça, là—le modèle de la maternelle à temps plein a changé de ce qui avait été présenté initialement. Un an plus tard, la ministre Wynne, la ministre de l'Éducation dans le temps, a fait des changements au modèle. Le modèle est devenu un petit peu plus flexible.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'était la ministre Dombrowsky.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Dombrowsky? OK. En tout cas, la ministre de l'Éducation avait fait des changements.

Je suis un peu curieuse, est-ce qu'il y a des meilleures pratiques, à savoir—on a rarement vu l'unanimité au niveau de la francophonie. Vous avez reçu des pétitions, des fax, des lettres. Je les ai reçues, puis je suis sûre que vous trois, vous les avez tous reçues. On en recevait de partout, que ce soit les ACFO, les AEFO, l'AFMO, tout le monde, en passant par la FAFO, etc. Ils sont venus au gouvernement pour dire: « Écoute, on n'est pas heureux avec ça. On a senti qu'on n'a pas regardé le modèle qui existait du côté des francophones. » Et il y a eu des changements. L'idée, c'est vraiment—dans l'an, un an, que cela a pris pour faire des changements, est-ce qu'il y a des meilleures pratiques à savoir de ça? Qu'est-ce qui a fait qu'on a pu avoir les changements un an plus tard?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Qu'est-ce qui a fait? Bien, je pense que c'est les gens qui venaient, les groupes de pression qui ont fait des représentations, puis l'écoute de la ministre à ce moment-là. C'était une recommandation du D<sup>r</sup> Pascal, qui était l'expert dans la petite enfance et qui demeure l'expert dans la petite enfance, qui avait fait cette recommandation. Mais ce que je vous dis, c'est les commentaires que j'entends maintenant de

ceux qui travaillent là et des directions d'école et de la présidente du conseil scolaire, qui disent: « Maintenant avec cet ajustement-là, on n'est pas revenu à ce que c'était avant. »

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Non, non.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** On est parvenu—le modèle est là et quasi-intégral, mais je pense qu'il y a eu une ouverture et il y a eu des modifications. Maintenant, les gens s'ajustent.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Donc, c'est vraiment que le crédit pourrait être donné à tous ceux qui sont venus—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Tout à fait.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oui. Ici vous ont écrit, qui m'ont écrit, qui ont été—tout le monde qui est venu.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Tout à fait. Je pense que c'est beau de voir qu'on fait un pas en arrière pour en faire un de côté, que de se rentrer les deux talons dans le plancher, puis ne pas bouger. Alors, cela a montré une grande ouverture d'esprit: la ministre qui devait composer entre ce qui était proposé, puis ce qu'on recommandait fortement et ce qu'on a pu modifier pour satisfaire—peut-être pas à 100 %, mais quand même—la communauté francophone.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Avant que je ne commence ma prochaine, il me reste combien de temps, Taras?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Trois minutes et 34 secondes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Trois minutes et 34 secondes. OK, je vais en faire une. J'espère qu'on va être capable de la faire en trois minutes, 34 secondes.

Encore là par rapport aux écoles, à Toronto plus spécifiquement, il y a souvent des écoles françaises qui ont besoin d'expansion. Il y a plusieurs conseils scolaires anglophones qui ont du terrain supplémentaire. Quand les écoles francophones essaient d'avoir une des écoles des conseils anglophones, on leur offre de la « scrap »—il n'y a pas d'autre manière de le définir—qui ne sont pas bien placées pour les francophones, etc. Je comprends. Le conseil anglophone se dit: « Si on est capable de la vendre, l'école, c'est un terrain qui va nous faire beaucoup, beaucoup d'argent. » Mais à la fin de la journée, ce sont les contribuables qui perdent, parce que les écoles francophones, on a besoin de les bâtir. On finit par en bâtir une nouvelle, parce que le conseil anglophone a besoin d'argent.

Est-ce qu'il se passe quelque chose pour améliorer cette situation-là? On en a parlé. Je pense que les trois partis ont parlé de l'expansion des écoles françaises. Il y a de plus en plus de parents qui choisissent d'envoyer leurs enfants à l'école française. Pour que ça se passe, il faut des écoles. Comment faire pour gérer ça?

1430

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Alors, moi, je suis ministre d'un peu de tout. Il faut que je réponde aux questions d'à peu près tous les ministères.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** C'est beau, ça.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Maintenant, vous soulevez un très bon point. C'est un cheval de bataille avec les conseils scolaires, surtout les conseils scolaires



anglophones, parce qu'ils ont une diminution du nombre d'étudiants qui entrent dans leurs écoles. Alors, ils ont beaucoup d'écoles à mettre à la disposition. À venir jusqu'à date, c'est les conseils qui ont pleine autorité sur ce qu'ils font avec l'école. Maintenant, je pense que le ministre ou les ministres ont été capables. Ça a pris plus de temps que moins de convaincre, oui, le conseil scolaire de vendre l'école au conseil francophone, qui eux avaient de l'argent pour acheter l'école et puis la rénover. Mais souvent, ce qu'on faisait—vous avez tout à fait raison—on scindait le terrain. On vendait le terrain de l'école pour développer un condo, puis là, on offrait l'école, pas de terrain, au conseil scolaire francophone. Mais qu'est-ce que vous faites avec une école qui n'a pas de terrain? Alors, je pense qu'il y a du travail qui a été fait. Peut-être que, sans le vouloir, on a embarrassé certains conseils, puis ça a eu comme résultat de changer d'attitude. Ce n'est pas encore parfait. Je pense que quand on balance les faits, est-ce qu'on veut gérer toutes les ventes d'écoles de Queen's Park? Je ne pense pas que ce soit ce qu'on veut, parce que si 90 % des conseils vont selon les règles, ça demeure, à ce moment-là, la responsabilité de la ministre, et du personnel du ministère de l'Éducation aussi, de convaincre ces gens-là, ces conseillers scolaires-là.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Désolé, madame. Vos trois minutes et 34 secondes sont finies.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Puis-je avoir deux minutes de mon prochain, tout de suite?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Tu veux prendre deux minutes de vos prochaines vingt minutes maintenant?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oui.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Est-ce que tout le monde accepte cela? On va les prendre. Vous avez 18 minutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Juste pour finir, donc, il n'y aura pas besoin de changement de politique ou de choses comme ça. Comme tu dis, dans 90 % des écoles, les ventes d'écoles, ça se passe bien. Quand ça se passe mal, il y a un mécanisme. Va-t-il falloir recommencer ces batailles-là à chaque fois, ou va-t-il y avoir un règlement en place ou quelque chose en place qui va faire que la prochaine fois qu'on a cette bataille-là, on n'a pas besoin de recommencer à zéro?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je ne pourrais pas répondre à cette question-là, ce qu'ils ont dans leur panier, le ministère de l'Éducation, mais je pense que tout le monde reconnaît—et j'ai soulevé ce point-là assez souvent—que ce n'est pas la façon de faire. Alors, on espère—est-ce que tu as d'autres—

**M. Paul Genest:** Je peux ajouter qu'après le rapport du commissaire, quand il a parlé de ce sujet, la réponse du gouvernement était de—on a 700 millions de dollars de capital pour les écoles dans la grande région de Toronto, le GTA. On a annoncé sept écoles dans ces régions : Etobicoke, Scarborough, West Toronto, Stouffville—plusieurs écoles. On peut partager la liste. Alors, je pense que, comme M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur a dit, un

certain changement d'attitude du côté des conseils scolaires était nécessaire, mais cela est arrivé. Ils ont une certaine indépendance en ce moment, c'est vrai, et il faut travailler ensemble un peu, collaborer un peu. Mais je pense que le résultat a été très bon en bout de ligne.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci. Ai-je deux minutes?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Vous avez 21 secondes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK, ça va. Je vais laisser passer mes 21 secondes.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Cette heure a vraiment 22 minutes. On passe aux libéraux. Monsieur Zimmer?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm aware that there's a committee headed by His Honour, Judge Rouleau, and he's got a report containing a number of recommendations on how to address the question of French services in the—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Mr. Zimmer, could you pull your mike to your—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Oh, yes.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Thank you.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm aware of a committee headed by the Honourable Justice Rouleau. He's working on a report containing recommendations on how to address French services in the justice sector. Are you aware of the report and do you have any comment on the report? It's something that the Attorney General has been working on, part of his access to justice so that everybody has got equal access to the services and so on, but particularly the French community.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, indeed, I am very much aware of that committee. This was of concern to us from the francophone community but from the francophone law association, l'AJEFO. The concern was when someone appears before a judge and the judge qualified himself or herself as bilingual but it was very clear to the lawyer that the judge did not understand perfectly the evidence that was presented before him or her. Of course, it's of concern. It's of concern to both the lawyer and the client.

This situation was brought to the attention of the commissioner. As I said this morning, the commissioner reviewed the situation, and there was enough evidence given by lawyers from different parts of Ontario that there is an issue there. The Attorney General asked Judge Rouleau and the lawyer—his name is Mr. Levay, and it's another beautiful example of an anglophone studying in immersion; he is fully bilingual, so now he's on this committee—to help us to solve the problem. After a wide consultation by these two individuals—and we all know the reputation of Judge Rouleau. For those who don't know, Judge Rouleau was the lawyer representing the Office of Francophone Affairs in the Montfort case.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** That's the hospital.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** So he put forward the argument that was retained by the judges to give the right to the Montfort hospital. He's very well-versed and is the

only francophone judge now on the appeals court. He comes from the riding I represent; he comes from Vanier.

They reviewed it. They met with the Attorney General—they have not yet finalized their report—and I've met with them too. When you know Judge Rouleau—Judge Rouleau would try to find a solution. He's not a person that looks for controversy. How can we all work together to make sure, first of all, that we have enough bilingual judges across the province?

Those who qualified themselves as—but if I understand correctly, and we'll see it in the report, there's no test. When you apply—"Bilingual? Yes." Nobody tests them on how bilingual they are: Are they ABC or do they need extra training?

1440

The second issue will come out in the report. Like we said this morning, the judicial system should be aware, even if they're not bilingual, even if they don't hear francophone cases, of the French Language Services Act. It's an act in Ontario and they should be aware.

The Attorney General is waiting for the report and you'll hear more about their recommendations, but those are two issues that were brought to my attention by l'AJEFO, l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario. It's issues that the committee heard during their consultation and what resolutions they are suggesting to correct these situations.

We will wait, but at the same time that I'm saying that, I have to congratulate the Ministry of the Attorney General, because if there is a ministry that was ahead with regard to French-language services, thanks to Judge McMurtry—Judge McMurtry was a good Conservative who did transform the judicial system here in Ontario for francophones, so we owe a lot to him.

We know he's a great francophile. I don't think he speaks French, but francophiles for me are not those anglophones who speak French, but they are also those who support la francophonie. They don't speak a word but they support la francophonie.

For different reasons, Judge McMurtry—I have all the respect that I can have for someone of his stature. He has transformed the judicial, but he has also put a seed in the ground in that ministry, because when there is something with regard to francophone rights and providing francophone services, the Ministry of the Attorney General, with the former deputy attorney general who just left—

**Interjection:** Murray Segal.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Murray Segal was a great francophile also. I hope when the secretary of cabinet will choose the replacement for Murray Segal that he will hire someone of his stature.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Minister, I think you touched on a very interesting point when you noted that although Mr. Justice McMurtry was not bilingual, he certainly had a taste for French culture in its broadest sense, whether it was literature in translation or food or travel or political history, political thinking and so on. I think that's probably something that we, as a government, might want to emphasize.

A lot of people don't have the time or the ability or the access to develop highly technical French-language skills. But those same people do have an appreciation of French culture, whether it's flipping through the French magazines and reading the fashion magazines or reading *le Monde* in the English translation and so on.

What can we do as a government to really whet that appetite more that people have for French culture and French civilization in its broadest sense, even though they don't have the language skills in that technical or narrow sense?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** There is a different way, I suppose. A lot of these very militant francophones who I know all married anglophone women. So I guess that's a way to get the flavour and the culture. I'm always amazed to see these great militant supporters being separatists on their days off, and they married someone from the other culture.

But this being said, I think it's by our immersion system. I am pleased to say that recently I have received a lot of letters—a lot, probably 20 letters—from anglophone parents from the region of London who are asking for more French schools in London because of different reasons. One of the reasons is some francophones, because they are in an anglophone area—or personally, they didn't continue to practise their French and they lost their French. Now they are concerned about it, but under the Constitution, because they are an *ayant droit*—it goes to the grandparents. So their children are entitled to French school. We see that in Sudbury; we see that in London; we see that in different areas. They are very militant. They want their kids to go to French school.

It brings some challenges to the school system, because some teachers are telling me that in the first year—they are not in immersion; they are in French school—half of the class doesn't speak a word of French. When the school board is big enough and they have enough kids in this situation, they can have a full class of these kids who are in French kindergarten or whatever, and they don't speak a word of French. But because they are *ayant droit*, they are entitled. We welcome that—we're not saying we're not—but it creates challenges for the teacher if half of the class is French and the other half is English.

My mother-in-law used to teach in the Gaspé Peninsula years ago. If she were not dead, she would be 96 years old today. She was teaching in a class half a day in French and the other half in English. Let's say she was teaching grades 5 and 6. The anglophones and francophones were in the same class. So at the end of the year, they were all bilingual because of this. It has a positive aspect. It's not so anymore, but when she was teaching.

It's a great phenomenon. It brings challenges to the school board, but we love that challenge. And kids are like sponges. In no time, they learn the language. By Christmas, they speak fluently. That's a way. The other way also is on the cultural side: to go to and see a movie where there are subtitles, to go and see an opera where there are subtitles. Most of the time operas are in Italian,



so I read the subtitles, like any one of you. The Toronto theatre, the French theatre, they do the same thing.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** How much time do I have left?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Five minutes and 38 seconds.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I have another question. As you know, Minister, I'm the parliamentary assistant over at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. We have responsibility for aboriginal affairs and also dealing with Métis in the sense that they're part of the aboriginal—the Métis are, for the most part, French-speaking. Are there areas where your ministry and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs overlap on French-language issues, that is, on the aboriginal side of the ministry, the Métis, and the French-language services that you deal with. Are there any particular challenges in dealing with the language component of the Métis issue over at aboriginal affairs? What's the link or the overlap there?

1450

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** We, of course, work together. First of all, the Ontario association of Métis is in my riding, so on top of being the minister of francophone affairs and dealing with them on a regular basis, they are also in my riding. Of course, sometimes, I feel that they are in the same situation as we are: Are they First Nation or are they not? Are they francophones or are they not?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** So they have these challenges. They don't have 100% of the francophone culture, so they have these challenges. We have a common understanding, and we deal with them on occasion, not as often as we would like, but it's probably also because they are in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and they're not 100% aboriginal, so—we don't deal with them as often as I would like, but as an MPP, I do.

We do exchange best practices, because they want to continue to protect their culture and their languages and also their dialects. They also used to come to me when I was the Minister of Community and Social Services because they had their challenges when it came to us redistributing the money for social services because they were Métis; they were not really First Nation.

Yes, we do work together, and I do understand. We help them, and they help us also: What do we do? What best practices do you have? Often, they are in our school system, and we celebrate, in the school system; there are a couple of days a year where we celebrate their culture, and they're part of those who have a different culture. They bring in their own pieces of art. It's interesting. So, yes, we do have dealings with them.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** If there's a French-language issue or whatever that affects the Métis Nation, or they want to raise a language issue affecting the Métis French-language issues, would their starting point be to contact your ministry, or would they contact aboriginal affairs—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** They contact aboriginal affairs because they see it as—and within the structure of the Ontario government, they are in aboriginal affairs.

But they're always welcome to come to us, because there are a lot of them across the province. They are in our schools, and it's very important for them, as it is for us, to continue to keep their languages. Often, they have francophone parents or a grandmother or grandfather, so we share a lot of the same history also.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Chair.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame. Avant qu'on ne continue, maybe we'll just take a five-minute recess, a quick recess, and reconvene here in five minutes. Is that all right with everyone? Any disagreement? Good.

*The committee recessed from 1455 to 1504.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** We'll call this meeting back to order. When we left off we were at the 20-minute round for the official opposition.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm on page 12 now of the results-based plan briefing book, and I wanted to drill down to key strategy number 3: "Contributing to a stronger francophone community," particularly in the health side of things. It says here: "Provided support to the Ministry of Health in establishing six French planning entities, consistent with the francophone community engagement regulation." What are those six French planning entities, if you wanted to speak to them?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** These entities were the result of a request from the francophone community after the creation of the LHINs. In most of the areas so far, there's no francophone sitting on the board of directors of the LHINs, even in designated areas. The francophone community requested to have these planning structures across the province. They realized they could not have one per LHIN, so the ministry hired Charles Beer, because he was the minister of francophone affairs at one point, to do a review in the province and to give recommendations after consulting with the francophone community: How many of these structures should we have across the province? First of all, should we, and how many?

There were already some entities. Their responsibilities were not planning in health care, but there were entities. Some of them were well-developed and working well, but some others were one-person entities. To make a long story short, this was the recommendation, and the minister announced two or three years ago these six entities.

There is one for the north. There was some suggestion that there will be one for the northeast and one for the northwest, but there was an agreement that there should be only one for the north. I think it came to an agreement by these two areas speaking together. Anyway, there is one in Ottawa. There are four in the Toronto area: one in London; one southwestern, like Windsor; and one in Hamilton.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** What are these actual entities? Are they a department, or what is it? What is the entity?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** They are like a local health structure, a regional structure. They have a main

responsibility and, in some areas, they have different responsibilities.

Their main responsibility is to develop a method of engaging the local francophone community in developing the health needs and priorities for the francophone community, including the needs of diverse groups within the local francophone community, and it's all the time with regard to health: What are the health services available to the local francophone community and, if not, what can a LHIN do to improve that? Also, they develop a strategy to improve accessibility and integration of French-language health services in the local health system—identification and designation of health service providers for the provision of French-language services. They'll know what organization will offer a French service, let's say, in mental health, for instance. Is there a rehab clinic with francophone services? Also, they assist the LHIN with an integration of health services in that area. I know in my area, on top of that, they do help organizations or entities who want to be designated under the French Language Services Act. They kind of accompany them, give them advice, give them the tools on how to do it. Those are the responsibilities of these integration structures.

1510

**Mr. Michael Harris:** These entities, would they be the responsibility or accounted for under the Ministry of Health's budget?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, they are. Their budget comes from the Ministry of Health. What I have asked my francophone advisory committee is to help these entities to develop tools for how we assess if they are functioning well. Is it an added value for the francophone community or not? So, to develop the structure at the point where a year, two years later we're going to evaluate them and see if it's worth the investment. We don't just want to throw money at a system and then, after, say, "What are they really doing for the francophone community?" So, with the assistance of my advisory committee, these entities are developing that tool, that structure, that they are going to be evaluated against.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** So these entities have been in existence for how long, then? Or were they just set up this year?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** About two years.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Two years?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** And you plan on reviewing them at what time?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Some of them have really only been functioning for the past year and a half, so it was a bit too early after a year to evaluate them because they were hiring staff, they were finding their office space. So I cannot answer that question. This is going to be part of what they are doing right now.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Maybe you'd be able to comment on it in its initial stages for some of the ones that have been actually operating for two years: if they felt there's any redundancy or overlap with the LHINs and

how the relationship with the entities and the LHINs has been going.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** There is no overlap. I hope that they have a good relationship with the LHINs because it's actually the LHINs who are doing the heavy work with planning the health care and solving the health care problems in the area. I hope that they're working closely with them.

I didn't hear any issues right now but I know that at the beginning there was some resistance from some of the LHINs because they were representing a community that has a large majority of other languages than French, so they were not too in favour. But I guess after a couple of years now they have adjusted to that reality, and we hope that they're working well together.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** In some cases, would they actually reside in the same footprint or office space as the LHINs?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Not that I know of. They may be in the same facility as other health organizations, but I don't think that they are with the LHINs.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm not going to get into the merits of the LHINs. I think folks know where our party stands on the LHINs. But I will ask again or ask you why, I suppose, the LHINs wouldn't simply accept a francophone member on the board to save having to have these entities in the first place? I think the ultimate goal of the LHIN is to have the localized—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Integration.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** —integration of health care reflective of the community, and you would think that in some of these communities where there's a significant francophone population, they would want to consult with that community and have those people at the table making local decisions based on local francophone needs.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** For some LHINs, if it's not written in stone that they have to have so many francophone members, they're not encouraging or they're not facilitating this to happen.

It has been reported to me that in northeastern Ontario—I don't know if they have appointed francophone people in their LHIN, but there was an issue there. There was a decision taken recently where it was affecting the francophone community, but because there was no francophone on the board right now, the francophones were not consulted.

I agree with you partially, because I sat on the previous structure for about nine years when I was a municipal councillor in Ottawa—on the health board. To say that that board was working well—no, it was not. And to say that the francophones were well served because there was a little mini-position to represent the francophone community—no, it was not working well. We had the report on the French-language services at the end of the meeting, when half of the board members were gone—or they didn't have time to give us a report.



I don't know what is the right solution, but we're supporting this one for now and we'll see how well it does work.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Do you have a rough idea or estimate as to the annual costs for all six entities?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes, we do. It's \$3.8 million.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** All right. Thank you for that.

To go off that subject, I guess, I had a question from last year's results-based plan. Your goal was to "develop a new directive on the concept of 'active offer' of French-language services." I'm just wondering if you can explain what that is.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes. It's all nice to know that this office or this part of the ministry offers service in French, but if nobody knows and the person who is at the counter says, "Hi, how are you? What can I do for you?", you wouldn't know that this office would offer French-language services.

This action that we're asking the ministry is an active offer of French-language services. It's when they realize that the person has an accent or perhaps don't really know or just by looking at the name, they can say, "Voudriez-vous vous faire servir en français?" So the person is more at ease, because sometimes they're afraid if they ask, they may be told, "The person who speaks French is not here, so come back tomorrow."

The active offer of service in French—that's what it is. We want all ministries to do exactly that. Paul, do you want to add to that?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** If I could also add, the new regulation that the minister brought forward last year on third parties explicitly included reference to the concept of active offer. Yes, the commissioner indicated he'd like a directive. The fact that the minister put it in the regulation itself was a strong affirmation that this is the concept that we champion. The public service guide, as well, has the concept in there.

The whole notion is to make it absolutely evident to people that the government is there and ready to allow someone to have their exchange and receive their service en français, but you have to make the effort on the side of the service provider and not expect people to insist on or demand their rights, as it were. It's an easy interaction.

The commissioner champions the concept of "Make it possible for francophones and francophiles to vivre en français," to live their life en français, including when they're having interactions with their government.

1520

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I know that another key strategy was to promote Ontario's visibility in francophone affairs. I was the recipient this year of a letter calling for nominations to the Ontario Francophone Awards, which recognize deserving Ontarians, especially young francophone Ontarians, who have made an outstanding contribution to the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of Ontario. I know folks at home will be watching, and there are always some good-news stories that come out of committee or estimates work. I know

we've had that over the course of the last few days and we'd like there to be a good-news story, obviously, coming out of this today. I know Kim Craitor, if he was here—there are an awful lot of folks in his riding who tune into this committee to watch, and I was hoping that you could share with the committee, if you are aware, maybe a brief highlight of some of the recipients of last year's awards and some of the contributions that they've made here in Ontario.

It says that there are at least three distinct awards, so I don't know if you'd want to get information on those recipients?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes. The first year that we gave these awards, there were so many good people who were candidates to receive the award. In the first year, the youth were not part of it, but in the first year, there were three awards for francophones and one award for francophiles. For instance, the francophone award—one recipient who received the award was the CEO of the Montfort Hospital. There was a lady who worked in economic development for the Toronto area who was a recipient of the award. There was someone from northern Ontario—Raymond Tremblay was the president of Hearst University. The francophile was Caroline Andrew, who is an anglophone, I think, from BC who came and did her studies at Laval University. She's completely bilingual. She was the dean of sociology at Ottawa U and was always so involved on the social side of issues in the francophone community and also in the Ottawa community. She was one of the recipients.

But the year after, we decided that youth should be part of it. In the second year, if I'm not mistaken, this was a teacher here in the Toronto area who was exceptional—Robert-Guy Despatie, who did an excellent job, especially with the students and with la politique d'aménagement linguistique. He was a real star within the youth community.

The second one was Chad Gaffield, who was another professor and historian, working for one of the federal ministries. He received the award.

Last year was the first year that we had a youth. His name was Christopher Sisto, a young professional. But all through his years as a student, he was a member of the association of young francophones and very much involved in the francophone community. Jean Comtois was the president of la FAFO, the association of seniors, and also a great teacher. He had a long history of working for and with the francophone community, either as a teacher, a school principal or president of the association of seniors.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Before we continue, I just want to make members of the committee aware that our seven and a half hours of time allotted to the ministry looks as though it will expire at about 4:30. At that point, we can decide as a committee to call the next ministry before us, which I believe is aboriginal

affairs, or we could defer, and choose to defer them until the next sitting of the committee. If they choose to use their half-hour opening statement, committee members won't get to even have one round at 4:30. I'll just pose that to the committee to see if there's any willingness to defer aboriginal affairs until the next sitting of the committee.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I think we should defer.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Since I'm the PA for aboriginal affairs, can I just take a minute to consult with my minister?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Actually, if we get a decision out of here, you could take a minute and then tell your minister what's happening, but I'd like to know what the committee would like to do.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm the PA. I'm going to tell the minister what's happening? Talk about a career-limiting move.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Can I ask the clerk a question?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Go ahead.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Clerk, how much time do we have in terms of scheduled sitting days?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** While you're talking, I'm going to go ahead and—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I know it's a half an hour, but my concern is that we're obviously not going to get through all the ministries that we've requested to analyze by our allotted time in November. My question to you would be: What would be the ramifications of this, with respect to the ministries that we may not get to as a result of delaying further?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** We're really only talking about half an hour right now. It's either we call aboriginal affairs before us for half an hour, have them maybe or maybe not use their opening statement—the full half an hour—at which point, at 5 o'clock, we're adjourned anyhow until the next sitting of the committee. So it's up to you guys, really. We're doing this pretty much as a courtesy to those who have to appear before us for aboriginal affairs to let them know whether we're going to continue at 4:30 or we're not.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would say, as a courtesy, I would be willing to let them. If they've all come here and prepared for today, then we'll sit down and listen to their opening statement. If they're just as happy not to come over, then I'm willing to oblige.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Can we revisit this question after the NDP round, maybe?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** We can do that.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** And then we'll have some info from the parliamentary assistant?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** That's right. The PA can liaise with the minister, and we'll figure this out.

On continue, 20 minutes—18 minutes, madame Gélinas. Je m'excuse. Désolé.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Okay, Chair, let's kick aboriginal affairs off.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** So they're willing to appear at the next sitting of the committee?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Is that the will of the committee, that we adjourn at 4:30?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sure.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Okay. Agreed? Agreed. Great.

**Interjection:** I'll disagree.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** All right. Wonderful.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mes 18 minutes ont commencé? Il m'en reste 17 minutes et 59 secondes?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Je voudrais vous parler un peu du processus de désignation. Pour des nouveaux organismes, je suis bien fière; je pense qu'on est rendu à 222 organismes, à peu près, qui sont désignés, et on est quand même bien fier de ça. Mais c'est quand même un processus qui va à la vitesse d'une tortue endormie. La mélasse en hiver, vous connaissez ça? Vraiment, entre le temps où l'organisme a pris sa décision, a mis ses politiques en place, a commencé le conseil d'administration, a fait sa demande et a reçu leur certificat pour mettre sur le mur, on parle d'années. Est-ce qu'il y a une ouverture au niveau de votre bureau pour essayer de regarder tout ça dans le but de rendre le processus un peu plus rapide?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Absolument pas, ça ne prend pas deux ans. Nous, quand on la reçoit—comment est-ce que je vais dire? Deux mois?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** À l'Office, oui.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui, deux mois, puis c'est présenté au cabinet.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Quand vous le recevez, oui, mais c'est parce qu'il y a beaucoup, beaucoup d'autres étapes. Il y a l'étape où le conseil d'administration se met en communication avec—comment il s'appelle encore?—le coordonnateur de services en français. Le coordonnateur de services en français, après ça, parle avec les gens dans votre bureau. Après ça, ils font une demande formelle à votre bureau. Votre bureau va au cabinet. Du cabinet, on s'en va au lieutenant-gouverneur. Du lieutenant-gouverneur, il y a quand même le processus entre le moment du côté de l'agence.

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Du côté de votre bureau, la partie que votre bureau fait, oui, ça se fait assez rapidement, mais si vous regardez le processus du côté de l'agence, l'agence, entre le temps où ils ont, pour la première fois, approché leur coordonnateur aux services en français pour dire : « Bon, nous, on rencontre »—puis là, je vais aller vite—« on offre des services en français de façon permanente, on est accessible, on a une représentation francophone au conseil d'administration, on a notre politique écrite pour les services en français, on est prêt », ils ont quand-même travaillé longtemps. À partir de ça, aller jusqu'au temps



où ils reçoivent leur petit certificat—vous ne pensez pas que c'est long? Vous pensez que c'est bien?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Non, mais ce que je vais vous dire, c'est qu'on va revoir à l'intérieur des ministères, mais je suis tout à fait surprise de le voir, parce que nous, aussitôt que ça arrive, il n'y a pas de problème; toutes les étapes ont été suivies. Souvent, c'est que l'organisme n'a pas fait toutes les démarches, qui ne sont pas des démarches difficiles, mais on doit s'assurer que les services—parce que des organismes qui veulent être désignés sous la Loi sur les services en français, ça vient de s'éteindre là. Après ça, ils ne continuent pas. Alors, il n'y a pas de processus de dé-désignation. On veut s'assurer, premièrement, qu'ils sont sérieux, mais aussitôt que ça arrive, il n'y a pas de délais. Il y en a peut-être eus dans le passé. C'est sûr que s'ils font la demande le 30 mai, ça peut peut-être prendre plus de temps—mais absolument pas. Nous, on dit que, aussitôt que ça arrive à l'Office des affaires francophones, dans les prochains deux mois—des fois, on attend, avec le certificat, parce qu'ils veulent faire un événement spécial, puis ils veulent que telle personne soit là ou que je puisse m'y rendre, ou quoi que ce soit, on attende une réunion de l'AGA pour remettre leur certificat, mais ils sont déjà désignés. Mettre leur petit certificat sur le mur, ça prend peut-être du temps, mais ça n'a rien à faire avec le processus ici.

Maintenant, je vais demander à Daniel de revoir si c'est vrai qu'à l'intérieur du ministère ça tire de la patte. On va s'assurer, mais encore une fois, quand ça tire de la patte, c'est parce qu'il y a des choses qui manquent. Et puis, ils pensent, eux autres qui font la demande, qu'après ça ils n'ont pas besoin d'avoir rien en place—

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Allo, madame.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Allo, Gilles—puis après ça, là, commence le processus de désignation. Non.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Selon vous, entre le moment où un organisme pense qu'il est prêt, qu'il contacte son coordonnateur de services en français, et le moment où il est désigné, peu importe ou non si le certificat a été remis, selon vous, c'est un processus qui prend combien de semaines, de mois ou d'années?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** S'il n'y a pas de complications, on ne voit pas de raison pour laquelle ça devrait prendre plus de six mois. Deux ans, ce serait parce qu'il y a eu des complications hors de l'ordinaire.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, pour vous, entre le temps où le conseil d'administration passe une proposition qui dit : « On veut devenir désigné » et le temps où cela passe au cabinet puis se rend au lieutenant-gouverneur général, six mois, ça peut être fait?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK, maintenant, si on regarde du côté des organismes qui sont désignés, il est supposé d'avoir un rapport d'auto-évaluation à tous les trois ans, fait par le ministère en question. Est-ce que vous gardez un œil sur ce processus-là? Parce que ça ne semble pas être suivi à la lettre, disons.

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Oui, ça se fait, mais on a déjà mentionné, de façon publique aussi, qu'il y a peut-être matière à revoir un peu le processus de vérification pour s'assurer. D'ailleurs, ça a été un sujet au colloque à Ottawa, du 25<sup>e</sup>, qui a été discuté. On s'est engagé à revoir un peu le processus de vérification pour s'assurer que les agences continuent à être conformes aux exigences de la loi pour la désignation.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça va se faire comment, cette vérification-là?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** On n'a pas encore déterminé la méthode, mais sans doute que ça va impliquer les membres de la communauté, les agences comme telles pour s'assurer qu'on ait toute l'expertise autour de la table.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Est-ce que votre bureau va avoir un rôle à jouer dans cette revue-là?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Tout à fait. Ce serait dirigé par l'Office.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ce serait dirigé par l'Office? Puis, quand est-ce qu'on peut s'attendre à ce que le nouveau processus dirigé par l'Office soit en place?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** On espère initier le processus au début de l'automne, après les vacances d'été, au retour. On envisage que ça devrait nous prendre de six à huit mois, à peu près. Encore, c'est moi qui parle un peu comme ça. Je n'ai pas fait une planification stratégique là-dessus encore, mais de six à huit mois, disons.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK, donc, en théorie, par l'automne 2013, si je me lève en Chambre et demande à Madeleine où ça s'est rendu, on devrait en avoir une pas mal bonne idée?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Si vous me dites que vous allez faire ça, alors, oui, ça va se faire.

*Laughter.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** On a des garanties? Donc, on va avoir une pas mal bonne idée d'où est rendu le processus de suivi pour les organismes. Est-ce qu'on pense garder un processus tri-annuel? Donc, à tous les trois ans, on ferait une petite mise-à-jour pour savoir si on rencontre encore les critères?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je pense que trois ans, c'est acceptable. On ne veut pas non plus rendre le processus onéreux que les personnels sont toujours en train de faire. C'est comme si on n'a pas confiance en nous autres. On va faire la police encore. Avant, je disais : « Ce n'est pas moi qui suis la chef de police. » Maintenant, je suis devenue la chef de police. Alors, je ne peux plus donner cette excuse-là. Mais on ne veut pas faire la police. On travaille en collaboration avec nos agences.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Une autre chose par rapport à la désignation qui revient souvent est par rapport à comment le critère de disposer une représentation de francophones au sein de son conseil d'administration est appliqué. Moi, je viens du milieu de la santé. Dans le milieu de la santé, force d'en faire, tout le monde s'est comme entendu : un conseil de moins de 10 personnes, au moins un; plus de 10 personnes, au moins deux, puis,

si tu es dans une région où il y a une grosse concentration de francophones, tu vas avec la proportion. Donc, si je parle de Nickel Belt, on regarde 33 % de francophones. Les conseils d'administration des agences désignées doivent avoir au moins 33 % de membres de leur conseil d'administration qui sont francophones.

Ça s'applique assez bien au niveau de la santé, mais dans les autres ministères qui ont des agences désignées, c'est différent. Quant à moi, je pense que le commissaire disait un peu la même chose, le même son de cloche que moi. C'est un peu une meilleure pratique, ce qui s'est vraiment mis en place du côté de la santé. Est-ce que votre bureau avait jamais pensé de clarifier cette partie-là des obligations des organismes désignés par rapport à la représentation francophone?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça n'a pas été fait au point de départ. Je pense que c'est une lacune; je suis d'accord avec vous. C'est comme les entités, les réseaux. Mais comment ça se fait qu'il n'y a pas de francophones dans les régions désignées? Alors, puis aussi une personne—si la personne est en vacances, il n'y a personne qui représente. Alors, c'est tout ça qu'on va faire dans notre révision. Mais j'aime beaucoup le modèle que tu viens d'élaborer selon le nombre, puis selon la région, bien sûr. Alors, pour avoir maintenant en même temps—est-ce qu'on veut dicter aux hôpitaux, aux collèges, aux universités combien de membres? C'est l'autre question qu'on devra se poser, mais j'aime bien le modèle que tu suggères.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, est-ce qu'il y a en ce moment un processus qui se passe à votre bureau même? Quand on regarde les quatre conditions pour être un organisme désigné, une, c'est la représentation au conseil. Est-ce qu'il y a un processus à votre bureau qui regarde ça? Puis, si jamais on arrivait, vous prenez une décision—bon, mais c'était vague, un peu, la représentation au conseil. Ça a été interprété de différentes façons dans différents secteurs. S'il y avait une décision dans le sens où on va donner plus d'explication, est-ce que ça demande un changement à la Loi, ou est-ce que ça peut se faire par règlement ou par communication tout simplement?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Ça se fait par politique interne. Ça ferait partie du même processus dont je parlais un peu plus tôt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Qui va être à l'automne prochain, quand je vais vous poser une question?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Oui, c'est ça.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK.

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Donc, le processus regarderait un peu tout le processus, de A à Z, de la désignation des agences. On regarderait si les critères sont encore contemporains. Ça répond encore aux besoins d'aujourd'hui parce que ça a été fait vraiment en 1989. Donc, ça date encore de quelques années.

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Donc, on en veut tout revoir: le processus de désignation, comment vérifier la conformité avec la Loi, la représentation francophone sur les conseils d'adminis-

tration, les critères de désignation. On va tout regarder de A à Z pour s'assurer qu'on a un système contemporain.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Puis je vais m'assurer aussi que le comité sur les services en français, mon comité aviseur, soit aux faits, puis qu'eux aussi soient consultés. Comme je disais tantôt, ils représentent chaque région de l'Ontario et ils sont très branchés dans ces régions-là. Alors, ce serait bon de les consulter.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Parce que ça, c'était ma prochaine question. Cette revue-là, est-ce que c'est une revue interne faite par les membres de votre bureau? Ou est-ce que c'est une revue dans laquelle les gens intéressés vont avoir la possibilité de participer? Ou c'est vraiment à l'interne avec votre comité exéc?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** On a déjà, premièrement, entendu des sons de cloche des agences désignées. Comment va se faire la consultation? Je pense que je vais laisser ça à l'Office, cette opportunité. Mais je veux, comme je disais tantôt, que le comité aviseur, qui est un comité indépendant, me dise, est-ce que ça va? Aussi, je pense qu'on pourrait impliquer l'entité de planification d'Ottawa qui, eux autres, se sont donnés ce mandat-là d'aider les gens à la désignation. Eux autres aussi ont un bon son de cloche, de ce qui fonctionne et ce qui ne fonctionne pas. Alors, ce qu'on veut, ce n'est pas un système parfait, mais presque parfait.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, puis vous—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Puis si tu as des idées-là—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oui, j'en ai.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Tu es la bienvenue.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, vous êtes d'accord que, après quasiment 25 ans, c'est probablement temps de le regarder un peu, et on peut s'attendre à avoir un processus qui va être renouvelé. Il y a des choses qui sont encore bonnes qui vont être gardées, mais d'autres choses qui pourraient être améliorées pour rendre la désignation, le processus en lui-même, quant à moi, un peu plus rapide, parce que moi, j'ai des sons de cloche que c'est lent. Mais en tout cas, si ça va bien, c'est peut-être—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mais je pense que ce sont des exceptions. Je veux dire que quand je suis arrivée en 2003, il y avait des désignations qui attendait depuis longtemps. Si je ne me trompe pas, je pense qu'il y avait quelque chose comme 25 ou 50 désignations qui attendaient.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Puis ça, des désignations, est-ce qu'on peut en faire à n'importe quel temps?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** N'importe quel temps.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, ils rentrent, ils sont revus par le cabinet, puis après, ça s'en va au—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Là, on attend le Collège boréal—pas le Collège boréal, mais l'Université Laurentienne, l'Université d'Ottawa, la Cité collégiale. On ne sait même pas si les documents sont rendus, mais on lit dans les journaux que ça s'en vient. Alors, oui.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. Donc ça s'en vient.

Il me reste combien de temps, monsieur?



**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Trois minutes, 32 secondes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** OK. En trois minutes, je vais vous poser mes questions sur les coordonnateurs et coordonnatrices des services en français. Il en reste combien dans les réseaux? Qui les paie et où sont-ils?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Le nombre : Daniel va vous dire ça. Qui les paie : ils sont payés par le ministère en question. Quand ce sont des petits ministères, il y a peut-être une responsabilité de deux ministères. Dans les gros ministères, il y a un coordonnateur, comme en Santé. Même en Santé il y a un coordonnateur, mais il y a toute une équipe autour; Justice, c'est la même chose. Mais des petits ministères-là, cette équipe—ce qu'on a changé, c'est qu'avant, ils ne se rapportaient pas à la bonne personne. Alors, c'est sûr que ton pouvoir, c'est selon aussi à qui tu te rapportes.

On ne pouvait pas avoir une structure qui soit commune tellement, parce que chaque ministère était différent, mais ce qu'on a trouvé, c'est que la personne en charge de la gestion et des finances, qui s'appelle un—

**M. Paul Genest:** Directeur général administratif.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Directeur général administratif. Alors, le coordonnateur se rapporte maintenant à cette personne. C'est au niveau du sous-ministre adjoint. Alors, au moins, la structure est élevée maintenant. Ça leur donne plus de pouvoir.

On a formé aussi des « clusters ». Il y a trois clusters, puis un chef de cluster. On a mis ça en place, ça fait une année et demie. Ça va être réévalué parce qu'on veut s'assurer—c'était une recommandation d'ailleurs. Ça n'a pas été exactement ce que le commissaire voulait; c'est sûr que c'est des recommandations, puis le reste, c'est le ministère ou la structure interne qui prend la décision. Mais on est satisfait, puis je pense que les coordonnateurs trouvent qu'ils ont beaucoup plus de pouvoir maintenant et de crédibilité, parce qu'ils se rapportent à quelqu'un qui est plus important.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Donc, il y a combien de coordonnateurs et coordonnatrices?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** En tout, le personnel affecté aux services en français dans les différents ministères, il y en a dans les environs de 32. J'ai fait un calcul très rapide. J'aimerais vérifier, puis m'assurer que j'ai le bon nombre ultérieurement, mais c'est environ 32.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Si tu as une liste qui dit quels sont les noms de leurs postes, parce que, comme au ministère de la Santé, il n'y a pas juste des coordonnateurs et coordonnatrices, il y a un coordonnateur en chef ou quelque chose; je ne connais pas les titres. Mais si tu l'as par ministère, j'aimerais avoir cette liste-là, pas nécessairement de la personne, mais du titre par ministère, puis si on parle d'un, deux ou trois postes, des choses comme ça.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Écoute, on n'a pas de secrets. Puis même si vous voulez avoir les noms—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Le plus d'information que vous pouvez partager—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est parce que, des fois, les noms changent, mais en tout cas, oui.

**M. Daniel Cayen:** On va vous faire suivre ça.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** C'est beau. Je vous remercie.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci. On se tourne aux libéraux. Monsieur Zimmer?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Earlier on, Minister, you mentioned the challenges that you're facing dealing with new French or French-speaking immigrants, especially here in the large urban centres. I'm thinking of former French colonies in North Africa, French colonies in Central Africa—Congo, Chad and the like.

How do you track the numbers or get a sense of the numbers of French-speaking immigrants and where they're from? And how do you go about reaching out to them in ways that are perhaps different from how you reach out to traditional Canadian francophones? I put that question out to the minister or the deputy minister.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm going to turn it over to Paul, but we have to distinguish ourselves from Manitoba, from New Brunswick and from Quebec, because years ago they were provided by the federal government with their own authority to welcome immigrants. They could go and have their own office in Europe or in African countries to bring people. It's still the case, but I heard, during our meeting of the ministers of francophone affairs in Edmonton in June, that the federal government will take that away from these provinces. They're not too happy. Is it going to happen? I'm not 100% sure, but that's what they were advised.

As I said, it's the federal government, along with the requests from immigrants, which makes a decision where these people are going.

There are two streams. I'm going to let Paul talk about it, but there is a professional stream. If we need special talents in certain parts of the province, we can request it from the federal government. It's not 100% sure that they will come, but it has a good chance. And we have—I will call it a sped-up process, where these people don't need to wait out the length that another immigrant would need to.

Paul, would you answer the "cuisine" of this?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** I'd be delighted to. This, of course, is the responsibility of our Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, which will keep track of and keep statistics on where folks are coming from. Haiti is another country that I'd mention in addition to the list that you cited.

What we call integration and settlement services: Typically, these are third party agencies that receive funding from the federal government and some funding from us as well. It's critical that when new immigrants arrive they get information on where those with French-language capacity are. Part of their job is to introduce them to social services that are available, including schooling for their children, so they know, in the area where they're getting housing, where the francophone school is, or immersion, if that's what they want, and also the availability of health and social services that are

French. Those settlement agencies will take responsibility for doing that.

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The province of Ontario has been advocating for a number of years to get the responsibility for that devolved from the federal government because our feeling has been that there has been overlap and duplication in this and that the services could be better coordinated. The federal government has recently sent a very strong signal that it wants to reclaim these, much less are they ready to give them to Ontario. They yanked these services back from Manitoba and British Columbia, as well, much to the dismay of those provinces, but that was the decision taken by the federal government. It's not clear that there's a lot of use for us to continue to bark up that tree, if I may put it that way.

It's the federal government that's responsible for selection of immigrants. Quebec, of course, has responsibility—they were given in the late 1980s, during the period of Meech, responsibility for selection and integration and settlement services by the federal government. With the exception of the provincial nominee program, the vast majority of our immigrants who come to Ontario have been selected by the federal government.

We have something called the provincial nominee program, which exists in other provinces as well, and we get to choose up to 1,000 immigrants. It does take a lot of resources and officials to evaluate immigrants and their potential for succeeding and thriving in Ontario. We, for instance, have identified Ph.D. students as ones that we're particularly interested in.

I take this a little bit far afield from the francophone, but that capacity does exist, and citizenship and immigration does a good job of producing materials en français to help orient newcomers. But again, I think it's felt that we can do a better job if that were devolved here to us.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** If I may add, the immigration ministry will develop a strategy on immigration and they will have their own francophone advisory committee to help them, since the largest francophone immigrant community comes to Toronto, in Ontario—not in Canada, but in Ontario. We need to make sure that we have the right tools, the right settlement programs, everything in place.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Can you give me some sense of why a French-speaking immigrant, whose language was French, no other language, a professional from Algeria—why they might choose Ontario when common sense might tell you, why wouldn't they go to Quebec? What would be the attraction there?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, sometimes it's because they have family here or they have friends or they heard that Ontario is vibrant and on the economic climb. Sometimes, also, they go to Quebec as their first place of arrival, but then, because they don't get the job or they are unemployed, they decide to come to Toronto because they feel that there's a lot of employment here,

not knowing that in Toronto it's difficult to work if you're not bilingual. That's the reason, I'll say, that some unilingual francophones will arrive here. Some others, they speak other languages, but not knowing that perhaps their other languages are not common here in Ontario, they feel that, with their other languages, they can have a job here. So for different reasons, but I'll venture to say that those are probably the main reasons.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Another question that occurred to me was—we've got 26 ministries here in the provincial government, 26 or 27?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. David Zimmer:** As I understand it, each of those ministries, the other 26 or 27, has an obligation to provide certain services in French. How does your ministry interact with those other ministries? Do you give them advice or help them to provide the services? Do they call you up and say, "We're the ministry of X, and we're struggling with a French-services program"? If they raise that question with you, then who takes the lead on developing the strategy: your ministry or the Ministry of Correctional Services or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs or something, which asks for your advice? How does that relationship work?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** We came a long way since 2003. In 2003, when I came, I don't think that there were many ministries that felt that they had the responsibility to offer services in the French language. They felt that it was more the Office of Francophone Affairs' responsibility.

A lot of work has been done changing the role of the Office of Francophone Affairs. We are advisers; we help ministries, but to offer services for the francophone community is each ministry's responsibility. To help with that, about six or seven years ago, the secretary of cabinet put in the evaluation as a point that he or she evaluates the deputy ministers and the assistant deputy ministers on their offer of French services, to make sure that they understand. There was also a lot of training that was done by the Office of Francophone Affairs about the French language—what should be their responsibility.

We work now as advisers. We coordinate, we help, and we assist, instead of policing. We have come a long way.

Just to give you examples and for instances, let's say some ministry will develop a new—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Sorry, Gilles? I can't hear.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Sorry, David.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** —a new policy or a new procedure. They may call the Office of Francophone Affairs and say, "What should we do? We need some advice on that." Or if there is a complaint to the office about the lack of francophone services in one of the ministries, the office will work with that ministry to help to correct the situation and, often, to work as an in-between with the complainant and the ministry.

Sometimes, it needs a bit of convincing, so we have to go higher. Sometimes, we have to go to the deputy min-



ister. That's Paul's role. I can tell you that he has been very successful so far. You've all heard, when we had—what was the public health event that we had a couple of years ago?

**Mr. Daniel Cayen:** H1N1.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** H1N1. The information on how to prevent getting H1N1 was only in English. In my community paper, in *Le Droit* in Ottawa, the joke was that a francophone will never get H1N1; that's why they don't need to have the information.

Paul was able to work with the deputy minister and, at my level, with the minister. I have to say that this was corrected within a few days.

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Paul, do you want to elaborate also on how we work with other ministries? I can tell you, another thing that I want to say is that when I came in 2003, there was no deputy minister responsible for francophone affairs. The assistant deputy minister—first of all, it was not an assistant deputy minister; it was a *directeur général*—was reporting directly to the secretary of cabinet. Do you think the secretary of cabinet had time to look after francophone affairs? No.

We changed the structure because this was not working. I was the assistant deputy minister and I was the deputy minister and I was the minister, but I never attended any of these meetings because I was an elected official—I'm joking; I was not the assistant deputy, but I had to act as one.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You took a pay cut.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

We changed that and we had our first deputy minister of francophone affairs. I can tell you that there was a change in focus.

Paul—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Just before Paul, let me throw this question into the mix, too. Here's the hypothetical: Your ministry gets a call from a concerned citizen or a concerned group that raises a substantive issue about the delivery of French services in ministry X. You contact ministry X, the deputy contacts, and you start your mediation process, work it out, solve the problem, but in the process of solving the problem it becomes apparent that there is—and I'm particularly interested in this in these days of restraint, budget restraints and so on.

In coming up with a solution, it's quite clear that there's going to be an expenditure, and it might be a significant expenditure, and ministry X says, "We don't have any room in our budget envelope for this. You pick it up." Your ministry picks it up and you say, "Well, we don't have an envelope, either."

How do you sort out those additional expenditure requirements, if that's a component of providing the services, and the ministry can't or doesn't want to or is reluctant to pick up the expense? Who solves that problem?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** It will vary situation to situation, but I'll give you an example of a situation where—you

know, we seemed to be, in the development of the regulation for the planning entities in the LHIN legislation—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Ah, yes.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** There seemed to be an impasse. The community was in one place; the ministry seemed to be in another. We tried to broker it a bit. Things were working well in the Champlain LHIN, where they were well-advanced and they had a model agreement. We reached out to the chair of the LHIN there to explain to us how they'd come to their agreement. We used that as a model. We introduced it to the Ministry of Health and they said, "Ah, that could work for us." So they weren't having to reinvent the wheel. And Madame Meilleur, at her level, was certainly working with the Minister of Health to get us past this impasse.

There was also a wariness. I mean, money is tight. Money was tight before, after the meltdown. But at the end of the day, they recognized that they would have to fund these entities. You couldn't ask people to do something as complex as health planning off the side of their desks. One way or another, they found the money to do it, and that then became the model for what are now the six planning entities.

We try to stay in touch with the community, we try to work with our colleagues not as *la police*, but nous nourissons la collaboration avec eux. I think that was a good model of collaboration. It will vary in different situations, but we have to try to keep our finger on the pulse. We stay in touch with our coordinators as well.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'll give you an example of when there is no money. I think you were not here when I spoke about this. The commissioner needed another inspector. Of course, the money for the commissioner comes from my budget. As you have seen, I have a very small budget, so no money for that. The ministry—Paul—spoke to the Deputy Minister of Health, and it was at the time of H1N1 and all this jazz. There were a few complaints from the citizens towards the Ministry of Health. The deputy said, "Most of the investigations recently have been for our own not doing, so we'll give you a position." So they took from their budget the money for one position for an inspector and they gave it permanently to the office of the commissioner.

Sometimes it's not money that they need. Sometimes they think it's money, but it's not money. We try to find a solution that is palatable and not costly and that will satisfy the two parties—not 100%, perhaps, but 80%, and we are able to resolve the problem this way.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** And one last question; we're getting to the end of the day now.

If you, as the minister, and you, as the deputy minister, today sort of do some crystal ball gazing, looking down the road one year, three years, five years, six, seven, eight years—in terms of providing French-language services across the board, across government, where they're required and expected and, indeed, where there's an entitlement, where do you see the next challenges over the next five- or six-year period?

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Madame? Je m'excuse. You'll have to answer that in the last lightning round of 10 minutes, which we'll begin right now with the Progressive Conservatives.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** If I could come back to that question—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Lightning round?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Ten minutes.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** All righty. Minister, I know it's been a long day for you. I'm just wondering how you feel our questions—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** An enjoyable day.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** How do you feel our questions have been to you today?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I am very pleased with the interest of the three parties sitting around the table and the quality of your questions. I know that this morning, there were some questions about why we are asking the Office of Francophone Affairs, with a budget of \$5 million, to come and appear before this committee. But it has been most enjoyable. I was glad, because it's the only opportunity that I have to talk about what we do at l'Office des affaires francophones. Hopefully, you'll get to know more about what we're doing and you can turn to us and ask for our advice or help, if you need it, or give us your own advice. It was a most enjoyable day that I spent with all of you.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Minister, I have just a few more questions related to some stuff today. One was—who came up with that, anyway, I wonder?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Was it Grant?

**Interjection:** Grant.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Was it Grant? I don't know.

I know there was a brief mention earlier on with respect to the Pan Am Games. I'm wondering what kind of services and support is the Office of Francophone Affairs providing with respect to the Pan Am Games, and I'm wondering if you have an estimate of how much that's going to cost.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** That's an excellent question. I'm glad to report that we have been involved since day one, because the Games are going to be trilingual: Spanish, English and French. Right from the beginning, the committee came and spoke to us and asked us what were our expectations. To my surprise, they already had a great plan for how they will offer the service, the students they will hire to provide that service. It's not more costly to hire a bilingual person than to hire a unilingual; it's not more costly.

As I said, our youth community are speaking more than one and two and three languages, so they were able to recruit in the same person someone speaking Spanish, English and French. And now, in the same person, you have the deputy responsible for francophone affairs and the Pan Am Games, so it's a win-win situation.

I turn it over to Paul to tell us about the Pan Am Games.

1610

**Mr. Paul Genest:** I know I will be in big trouble if we don't do a good job on francophone affairs, from my other minister. It's Minister Sousa who is my minister for the Pan Am Games.

I can't give you a firm cost at this point because we are in the planning phase. We have a committee of deputy ministers who are looking at celebration, community engagement and legacy opportunities around the games. That will involve outreach, certainly, to the Franco-Ontarian/francophone community, and also outreach to the aboriginal community, as well as to communities—we have a strong Caribbean community, of course, in the greater Toronto area. We are looking at festivals and that kind of thing.

Typically, for a games, the number of people who will participate in the events around the games is four to five times as many as the people who will attend the athletic events. There's something of a party around it and the energy that you can bring to bear.

You may have noticed that on July 10 there was an official three-year countdown for the Pan Am Games, and part of that day involved the Play Me, I'm Yours—Jouez, Je Suis à Vous—pianos that have been placed around the city, where artists who are resident in Ontario have painted the pianos in a way that reflects their nation. That kind of thing builds excitement, builds engagement. These pianos—people are striking up impromptu bands around them. We need to make sure that we're doing that kind of thing that engages the francophone community.

On our committee is the Deputy Minister of Education, and we are brainstorming about how to use the education system to help people understand curriculum, to have play days, that kind of thing. We'll be doing that with the francophone schools as well.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So do we have an estimated budget of what—

**Mr. Paul Genest:** We don't, at this point. There is an identified budget for the games of \$1.4 billion, which includes a contribution of \$500 million by the federal government for capital infrastructure and legacy, and \$500 million also by the province. The remainder will come from municipalities and university partners.

A portion of that budget in the Toronto 2015 games—approximately \$7 million—has been identified for promotion and legacy. But that doesn't factor in things like what we might be doing with the education system in terms of recreation programs, and how we can help deal with the child obesity program, for instance, by getting more kids enthused about playing sports and recreation and that kind of thing.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So that \$1.4 billion for the games is related to the capital infrastructure, or their operating costs?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** No. The federal contribution is \$500 million. They are making the land-share contribution to the capital for that and it's in the neighbourhood of \$370 million. And then—



**Mr. Rob Leone:** So there's no provincial money in the capital at all?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Correct. We're contributing for the operations of the undertaking.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** How many folks do you envision—I notice they're going to be trilingual or at least the capacity to speak two—probably more than one language. How many people are you anticipating hiring for the games themselves?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** It's in the neighbourhood of some 20,000 volunteers.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Oh, it's volunteers? Okay.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Yes, and I don't have—I didn't do my Pan Am binder, I'm afraid—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I know. I'm sorry about that.

**Mr. Paul Genest:** I delight in the opportunity to talk about how francophone affairs—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** We're not calling anyone from the Pan Am Games. Certainly, it's of great interest too with respect to estimates in terms of how the government accounts for those costs. Obviously, with every games there's a bit of uncertainty as to what the final number is going to be. We're wondering, certainly—we're talking about the francophone aspect of this. Since you're here, we've decided to elaborate upon that, and I thank you for answering questions in relation to that.

Going back to the results-based plan briefing book, I want to highlight two pages: one, page 6, and the other, page 12. I notice that the first part of this briefing book is the actual plan, the results-based plan for 2012-13.

I also note that on page 9 we're at the annual report for 2011-12.

My interest here is that on page 6, we have the key strategies contributing to a stronger francophone community. That includes health, post-secondary education, community and social services, education, immigration, northern development, tourism, economic development, French Language Services Commissioner, and labour market development and training. But when we look on page 12 of 27, we only see education, labour market development and training, health, immigration, and prevention of violence against women.

I'm curious as to why, for example, post-secondary education, community and social services, northern development, tourism, economic development, and French Language Services Commissioner weren't included in 2011-12, when it is this year. Was there a visioning process? How do we expand upon contributing to a stronger francophone community this year as opposed to last year?

**Mr. Paul Genest:** Each of those areas that you have cited, we have been involved in, in one way or another. Looking forward—post-secondary education, for instance: We're expecting that the Minister of MTCU will be receiving soon the report from the panel that is looking at PSE in the south and the southwest. We're expecting we will need to be engaged with our ministry partners as well as with the French-language bilingual post-second-

ary education in the coming period. We didn't have a heavy involvement on that last year.

That's just one example of why that has been added to our—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** I'll have to stop you there, Mr. Genest.

Alors, monsieur Bisson, bienvenue.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Merci, monsieur le Président. C'est un plaisir d'être ici parmi vous aujourd'hui. Madame Meilleur, comment ça va? Tu as eu un bel été jusqu'à date, j'espère.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Excellent. Vous avez eu la chance de faire la lune de miel que vous n'avez pas eu la chance de faire avant?

Don't tell no stories, okay?

Écoute, on a été approché par le Centre de santé communautaire de Kapuskasing, ça doit faire deux, trois ou quatre semaines. Le RLSS régional du Nord-Est a fait une décision d'encourager une discussion qui va fusionner l'administration des hôpitaux, puis les maisons de soins de longue durée et le centre de santé communautaire, dans une organisation. La difficulté avec ça, c'est que ce n'est pas nécessairement, comment dire, « Franco-friendly », dans le sens que—mais je ne dois pas dire ça. Ce n'est pas « fair ». C'est pour dire qu'en faisant ce fusionnement-là, ce n'est pas nécessaire que l'administration au centre de santé va demeurer francophone. Vos opinions là-dessus?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Écoutez, cette question-là, ce serait mieux de demander à la ministre de la Santé, parce que, oui, j'en ai entendu parler, mais très brièvement. Je ne connais pas les détails, alors je n'ose pas m'aventurer. C'est un modèle qui fonctionne très bien au Québec. Maintenant, est-ce que ça va—

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Au Québec, tout est en français—

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Justement. Alors, est-ce que ça va bien fonctionner dans la communauté de Kapuskasing? Je ne sais pas, mais je pense qu'il faudra le suivre de près. Tu as quelque chose à rajouter, Daniel?

**M. Daniel Cayen:** Je vais juste ajouter que le ministère de la Santé a demandé au RLSS régional de mettre halte un peu, de ralentir sur la question de fusionnement jusqu'à ce qu'il y ait une revue de ça, puis qu'il y ait davantage de consultations avec l'entité de planification des services de santé en français de la région. Donc, le processus a été ralenti, et puis le ministère a demandé qu'il y ait des résultats de ce processus-là dans les prochaines semaines. Pour l'instant, le fusionnement ne va pas de l'avant. Ça ne veut pas dire qu'il ne va pas aller de l'avant éventuellement, mais pour l'instant, on a demandé qu'il y ait davantage de consultations.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Parce que lorsque j'ai su que cet événement-là allait se passer, on a parlé tout de suite, à travers l'Office, au ministère de la Santé, et puis c'est là que la ministre est intervenue. Alors, ils ne doivent pas bouger tant qu'ils n'ont pas eu l'approbation.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** L'affaire qui me tracasse un peu là-dedans, c'est que le RLIS n'a pas, eux-autres mêmes, réalisé ce c'est un problème. Écoute, ça fait des années; vous savez, vous militez pour les francophones, comme moi. Ça fait des années; pour vous, le même, je m'imagine.

1620

La grosse bataille qu'on a eue, c'est de s'assurer qu'on a nos propres institutions pour être capables de donner les services à notre monde. Pourquoi? Parce que quand on se trouve dans une institution bilingue—ça veut dire une institution anglophone. On sait tous comme francophones ce que ça veut dire.

Donc, finalement, après des années de lutte, on a eu notre centre de santé communautaire, qui a été financé par M. Smitherman, ça fait sept, huit ans passés, et tout le monde en est fier. Je ne veux que vous dire, très clairement, en bon anglais : « That's off. » On ne veut pas être dans une situation où on a besoin de prendre ce qui est une organisation francophone et la mettre parmi une organisation bilingue, parce que tu perds l'habileté d'être capable de faire ton administration et tout en français. Êtes-vous d'accord?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** On suit le dossier de près.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Êtes-vous d'accord? Je sais que vous l'êtes. Vous êtes bonne francophone, madame.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui, je suis—écoutez, on s'est toujours objecté à des services bilingues parce que finalement, en bout de ligne, ça devient plutôt des services anglophones, mais je ne voudrais pas me prononcer sur quelque chose dont je ne suis pas au courant. Mais je sais que le ministre suit ça de très près.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Mais je vous dis, comme ministre des Affaires francophones, j'espère avoir votre soutien et votre appui si ça vient à une décision qu'on a besoin de contourner.

On a vu dans l'autre fusionnement, par exemple, avec le centre Jeanne Sauvé et Timmins children's aid et Timiskaming, la même affaire. Le centre Jeanne Sauvé était une institution francophone dans le sens où l'administration était faite en français. On se trouve là dans le fusionnement. Quels pas avez-vous pris pour vous assurer que les francophones ne se trouvent pas perdus dans ce fusionnement des services d'aide à l'enfance dans la région?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je ne suis pas au courant de ce fusionnement-là, puis je ne suis pas au courant qu'il y a eu des problèmes. On va s'informer, mais je suis—en fait, moi, comme ministre des Affaires francophones, j'étais un petit peu comme la marathonnienne; pas la marathonnienne, mais celle qui fait plusieurs sports. On me demande de répondre à des questions d'autres ministères dont je ne suis pas toujours au courant. Alors, je pense qu'il faut référer cette question-là au ministre Hoskins. C'est plus sa responsabilité.

Le danger dans les fusionnements, c'est comme lorsqu'on a tout fusionné les municipalités. Ma petite

municipalité de Vanier, qui était en majorité franco-phonie—

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Si belle.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** —a des défis à garder ses services. Je ne dis pas qu'ils n'en ont pas, mais c'est toujours un défi.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Non, non. Ça change les affaires. L'autre point, je pense, qu'on peut faire avec ça, c'est que, une partie du problème—oui, c'est par plainte que vous allez savoir s'il y a un problème, oui ou non, mais c'est aussi une question où on espérait que, à l'intérieur du gouvernement, à l'intérieur des ministères, quand des décisions sont faites—ça a toujours été la lutte avec le bureau des affaires francophones—qu'on se fait impliquer dans les décisions, qu'on peut au moins dire : « Une minute, là, il y a un problème », identifier le problème et comment on peut le contourner. Donc, je pense que vous souffrez un peu du problème des autres ministres qui ont servi avant vous et qui ont eu un peu le même problème; c'est que des fois, ces décisions-là sont faites et l'Office des affaires francophones n'est pas exactement informé. Donc, comme ils disent en anglais : « I feel for you. »

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je dois dire que ça arrive de moins en moins. Il y a eu beaucoup d'améliorations sur ce côté-là, mais malheureusement, ça arrive encore. Mais on apprécie le savoir. Le fusionnement à Kapuskasing, moi, j'ai appris ça d'un consultant qui vit dans ma région, qui a été mis au fait de cette situation-là, qui a appelé mon bureau. Alors, je ne l'ai pas appris par les gens de Kapuskasing; je l'ai appris par quelqu'un d'Ottawa qui m'a parlé de ça. Alors, c'est là qu'on est intervenu.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Je pense que ce n'est pas seulement le cas pour Kap. Je pense que c'est aussi une crainte que ça peut arriver dans d'autres régions.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Oui.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** C'est pour cette raison que les personnes de Kap et, je m'imagine, le monde de Sudbury et de Timiskaming, ont commencé à s'organiser et puis dire : « Qui est-ce qu'on appelle? » On appelle tout le monde et essaie de sonner les cloches, qu'on se protège.

Okay, thank you, monsieur le Président.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** C'est tout? Vous avez deux minutes, 45 secondes.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Deux minutes? Mon Dieu, qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire dans deux minutes? On pourrait parler des sujets qui sont importants—non, c'est correct. J'ai eu assez de questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** Mr. Zimmer?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Just coming back to my question that I left you with before in my last 10 minutes, crystal ball gazing, five, six years from now, what are the challenges and where would you like to see French services?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm seeing that French-language services within the government of Ontario are on the right path. However, there are always unforeseen challenges. One of the challenges, of course, is our fiscal



capacity to continue to offer the service to French-language communities.

My other challenge is, of course, wanting the francophone students, all the “ayants droit,” to continue to study in their own language. We will achieve that if the schools are available. In order to do that, we need to continue to build schools where the children are. I hear too often, not in the eastern region but more in the Toronto and southwestern regions, that kids finally choose to go or parents to send their kids to anglophone schools because their kids will have to travel for an hour or an hour and a half by bus, and they don't feel that it's okay to put their four-year-old daughter on the bus for that length of time. All of this started also at the kindergarten level.

One of my assistants is a single mom, and her kid was in a daycare in a French school. But now we're moving the French school too far away, so she cannot go the opposite way by bus to take her son to daycare. It's a problem.

I would like to see more schools in Toronto because we have the numbers. Our schools are full; that's why we are building schools. But Catholic or public, we should spread out our French schools to make sure that the kids are starting in kindergarten in a French school. Again, not because we don't have the population; we do.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** As a follow-up—because that is an issue in Willowdale, the need for more French schools, and there seems to be resistance or statements from the various school boards that they'd like to do it but they can't. The constituents come to me and say, “The school board says if you can get the province to give some more money to the school boards, they'll gladly put the school up.”

What do you say to that criticism? School boards say, “We recognize the need for French schools. We want them, but we can't afford them. We asked the province; they won't give us additional funding, so it's your fault, province.” That's what I hear in Willowdale. I don't necessarily agree with that, but—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I would not apologize for what we have done so far. We have invested more money than any government before in French education, both at the primary-secondary and post-secondary levels. We have been very generous.

A problem that we experience in the Toronto area is that they have the money, but they don't have the land to build, or there are surplus schools that are sold to developers instead of being sold to the French school boards to build these schools. Or the only land they can find—because this doesn't work—is out on the 401, where kids have to travel a long way. I'm not saying that we have all the money that we need for French schools, but we have and we continue to invest in building these schools.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** So would your ministry see a role for itself, as the guardian of the French language, to call up the school boards, or perhaps go through the Ministry of Education, and say, “School board, you've got to

fix this problem. Open up the school. Figure out a way to do it?”

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Of course I will never bypass the Ministry of Education. It's not my responsibility, but we have had, in the past, very good conversations at the ministry level and with the minister to make sure that this situation has been corrected. Sometimes it took too long to correct the situation, but I firmly believe that with what the minister in place has put forward to correct this situation, it will. If need be, we may need to change the legislation, but so far we'd like to work with our—because I'll say that 90% of the time, it works.

1630

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you. Have we got some time left, Chair?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** You've got four minutes left.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Okay, Grant. Let it rip.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Let 'er rip. Well, great job. Great job today, everybody. Bon travail. Où sont mes notes? Elles sont là. Elle a volé mes notes.

I would just like to say, further to some of the comments that you made about education and some anglophones putting their children into francophone schools, I was guilty of that. Both of my children—my daughter, Chloe, who is now 24, and my son, Calvin, 19—primarily spoke English, and we put them right into the French school system. Chloe caught on a lot quicker than Calvin, I'll be honest in that. They're both perfectly bilingual now.

My advice is to do what I didn't do for myself, as I, at 49 years old, continue to struggle to try to learn a second language. I'm not a sponge, as the minister had indicated, when you're trying to learn how the Legislative Assembly works and all the ministries work and all the people that are involved. I look back with regret that I did not invest more time and dedication, but I'm slowly picking away at it and continue to improve on a regular basis. I just wanted to put those out there, and also include my grandson, who's four now and speaks both languages perfectly. He's going to have a bright little future.

Having said that, the University of Ottawa, Madame, is going through some challenges at designation. Are you able to comment on where we're at with the status of that? Because that's important to myself and a lot of the residents of eastern Ontario, in my riding, in particular.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, let me congratulate you for putting your kids into French school, so you should not apologize. In some areas, there is no immersion, so parents choose; if they have space, the school board will accept them, and I'm sure that they did speak a bit of French when you put them in the school.

L'Université d'Ottawa has different challenges because it's not a French university; it's a bilingual university. With regard to the designation, they cannot designate the whole university, because that means that every service, every faculty, everything will be offered in—not bilingual, but in both languages. So there will be

one faculty of engineering with English engineering and French engineering. They do it in two—more than two, but two that I know well: health—they train the doctors. They have the French program and the English program. They do that in law also. And they have other departments where they offer the service or the courses or the degree in English and French.

It was not a lack of willingness to request the designation but, at the same time, they wanted to make sure that the senate, who has the authority at universities, has this flexibility to start a new program or to stop a program, if the program was not proper anymore or if they didn't have the registration to make sure that they can financially offer this program.

**Le Vice-Président (M. Taras Natyshak):** Merci, madame Meilleur. Désolé, notre temps est tout fini pour notre comité ici. Donc, we have some votes.

Before we do take our votes, I'd like to thank you, madame Meilleur, monsieur Genest et monsieur Cayen, pour votre témoignage ici aujourd'hui. C'était intéressant et very educational, I think, for all of us, so thank you very much for your time with us today.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** My pleasure.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** We are now required to vote on the 2012-13 estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs.

Shall vote 1301 carry? Carried.

Shall vote 1302 carry? We see both of those as carried.

Shall the 2012-13 estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs carry? Carried.

Shall I report the 2012-13 estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs to the House? Very good.

That completes our consideration of the estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs. I want to thank the committee members for a very enjoyable day. We will see you all, I believe, in the fall, if not sooner.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** And just as an aside, aren't you glad we're not sitting until 8 o'clock tonight?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Taras Natyshak):** We could go on forever, Mr. Zimmer.

This adjourns our meeting.

*The committee adjourned at 1636.*



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# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 28 August 2012

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 28 août 2012

### Standing Committee on Estimates

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 28 August 2012

Mardi 28 août 2012

*The committee met at 0901 in room 151.*MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES  
AUTOCHTONES

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We're going to call the meeting to order. Good morning, committee members. We're here today for the consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, which was selected for a total of 7.5 hours of review.

The ministry is required to monitor the proceedings for any questions or issues that the ministry undertakes to address. I trust that the deputy minister has made arrangements to have the hearings closely monitored with respect to questions raised so that the ministry can respond accordingly. If you wish, you may, at the end of your appearance, verify the questions and issues being tracked by the research officer.

I will now call vote 2001. We will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minutes by the minister, followed by statements of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition and third party. Then the minister will have up to 30 minutes for a reply. The remaining time will be apportioned equally among the three parties.

Madam Minister, the floor is yours.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you, everyone. Meegwetch. Merci. It's wonderful to be here. Bonjour.

I have to say that I'm in my third and fourth ministries, and this is the first time that I have been called to estimates. So I am absolutely sincere when I say that I'm very grateful to the committee and the members for this opportunity to talk to you about the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Laurie LeBlanc, my deputy, is here with me, and a raft of people who have all sorts of information are here as well. So I hope we'll be able to answer all of your questions.

I'm here to support our budget estimates for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. My goal is to provide some context for the more in-depth discussion that I know we'll have as the committee hearing progresses and as your questions are raised.

I want to start at the foundation of what it is we do as the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and for me that foundation can be summarized as working towards equity

of opportunity for all Ontarians, and specifically aboriginal people, both on and off reserve.

Le ministère des Affaires autochtones travaille en vue d'assurer un meilleur avenir pour près de 300 000 Ontariens et Ontariennes des Premières Nations, métis et inuits.

So that better future will, in turn, help to ensure that Ontario in the future is as prosperous as it can be.

If I look generally at what our government has been doing over recent years, we've made huge progress. Our infrastructure is being renewed—the power grid, roads, hospitals—our students are doing better in school, and our skilled workforce and competitive business climate are attracting the jobs of tomorrow.

But the question that I have to ask as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is: Are these opportunities equally available to everyone? They should be. It shouldn't matter whether a child is a newcomer or from a family from First Nation, Métis or Inuit communities.

Tous les enfants devraient grandir avec les mêmes perspectives d'avenir et les mêmes possibilités.

Too often, aboriginal children will face challenges that are more profound than other children in Ontario.

So when I look at the work we do at MAA, that's the perspective I take. That really is the frame within which I am working. So from my perspective it's about closing the socio-economic gap, and that's what I mean by "equity of opportunity."

Closing that gap is a monumental task. It is one that has to be confronted on many fronts. There's no single organization that can do this on its own. We need everyone at the table working together. So we need First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and leaders, we need industry, we need non-governmental organizations, we need individual Ontarians, we need all orders of government working together.

Je crois que le rôle principal de notre ministère est de servir de facilitateur.

We are facilitators in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. We don't claim to have all of the answers, and I would hazard a statement that all of the answers don't necessarily exist. They need to be co-created by all those groups I just talked about.

As a ministry, we certainly don't have unlimited resources, but we do have relationships and networks, and our work is to develop those relationships and networks. They're hugely valuable.



Aboriginal communities live day in and day out with challenges that many Ontarians reflect on only when they make the news headlines, and when we look for solutions, we turn to aboriginal community leaders for their insight, expertise and experience. This mindset is at the centre of the new relationship between the Ontario government and aboriginal communities.

I just want to emphasize that when we came into office, we were very clear and explicit that we wanted to put in place a new approach, a new way of working that's characterized by collaboration, humility, and respect for history and jurisdiction. At the provincial level, our ministry, MAA, works across ministries to ensure that the best interests of aboriginal communities are properly reflected in Ontario policy and programs.

Nationally, since 2009 the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, which has brought together leaders from national aboriginal organizations and provincial and territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs, has been working together to that same end. Ontario served as the chair over that period of time, and now that responsibility is passing to Manitoba.

The work at the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group focuses on three priority areas: first of all, increasing graduation rates for aboriginal students; supporting economic development opportunities in aboriginal communities; and finally, ending violence against aboriginal women and girls. Those goals are intertwined and they overlap, but those are the three separate areas that we have articulated.

The provinces have collectively called repeatedly for the federal government to participate in the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, and I will continue to call on the federal government to join these discussions. I believe that the issues are just too important for the federal government to remain on the sidelines.

I'd argue that the result of this federal disengagement was very evident in Attawapiskat First Nation this past fall and winter. When I was first appointed, this was an issue that came to the front pages of the newspaper, and you'll remember the images of families sharing shacks that wouldn't be considered suitable for any family living off-reserve, let alone in the dead of winter in Ontario's far north.

I contacted the chief of the community. I also had a conversation with the federal minister. Ontario mobilized the Emergency Management Ontario forces to help deliver building supplies and other materials and to make the assessment of what was necessary.

But in this, which was the first major issue I faced as aboriginal affairs minister, I was introduced to a fact that underlies many of the problems on reserves in Ontario, and that is a federal government that has primary responsibility for conditions, and particularly infrastructure, and yet, in my opinion, fails to take that duty as seriously as it should. Just recently, a federal court ruled that there were concerns about the federal government's handling of the situation in Attawapiskat, so that perspective seems to be justified. We need the federal government to work as a

collaborative partner with First Nations and the other orders of government if we're going to improve living conditions on the reserve.

I'm going to talk a little bit about our approach.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was created by our government as a stand-alone ministry in 2007. It was a key recommendation, you will remember, of the Ipperwash inquiry.

La création du nouveau ministère était un signe que le gouvernement provincial s'était engagé à mieux faire les choses.

In the five years since, I think we have done better. We've made significant progress working as partners with aboriginal communities, but there is still a lot more that needs to be done. The challenges aboriginal communities face are complex and, in many cases, entrenched over generations. I think any of you who have had the opportunity to read any of the stories or attend any of the events put on by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission looking at the impact of residential schools will know that that intergenerational impact is deep and very real.

**0910**

I'm sure you know some of the facts and figures. Across Canada, the high school dropout rate for aboriginal youth is two and a half times the rate of non-aboriginal youth. The unemployment rate for aboriginal people in Ontario is twice that of non-aboriginal Ontarians, and it can be much higher in remote First Nations communities. The suicide rates for First Nations youth are five to six times higher than non-aboriginal youth, and the life expectancy for aboriginal people in Ontario is eight to 10 years shorter than for non-aboriginal Ontarians.

There's no single fix to any of these problems. I think the way forward is a combination of working together to address the long-term, underlying causes of these inequities but, at the same time, working with our partners to deliver programs that make communities stronger today. It's a broad-based mandate that we organize under MAA's four key priorities. Our priorities are: stronger aboriginal relationships, improved social conditions, economic opportunity and sustainability, and enhanced land claim settlements and reconciliation. Any activity that we undertake under any of these four priorities has the same ultimate objective, and that is, as I say, to close the gap and equalize opportunity among aboriginal and non-aboriginal children.

I'd like to provide a closer look at some of the ministry's initiatives and successes across Ontario. I think a good way to illustrate this is by outlining some of the experiences that I encountered during my first visit this past winter to Pikangikum. I'm sure you know that Pikangikum First Nation is an Ojibway community in northwest Ontario.

I've made it my business, since I was appointed to this ministry, to travel a fair bit of the time. When I was Minister of Education and Minister of Transportation I also visited some remote communities, but in this role I

have attempted to get to many of the communities that have particular issues that need to be addressed.

I'm sure you know that Pikangikum First Nation is an Ojibway community in northwestern Ontario. It has a population of about 2,400 people. It was the first remote, fly-in community that I visited after becoming Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Pikangikum, as you know, was the subject of a chief coroner's inquiry into 16 suicides by children and youth between 2006 and 2008. Those young people took their own lives when they were between the ages of 10 and 19. September 2 will mark the one-year anniversary of the release of the coroner's report. My ministry and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services are co-leading the province's response, which is due this fall.

Ontario's 133 First Nations vary widely in their challenges and achievements, but the community of Pikangikum, I think, serves as a snapshot of where we've been able to make a difference and where there's more work to do.

Thirty minutes after my arrival in Pikangikum, or "Pik" as it's often called, I found myself sitting in the band office with the chief and about eight councillors. There was silence. Words didn't come easily, and the conversation was an awkward one. They didn't know me. There had been a number of aboriginal affairs ministers, and so obviously it was going to take some time to build that relationship. But it's with this scene that I introduce the first of the ministry's four priorities, and that is building stronger relationships.

The report of the Ipperwash inquiry set out a road map for the Ontario government to reframe its relationship with aboriginal communities. The contrast between the old and the new relationship, I think, has enabled us to accomplish more together, and we look forward to building on that foundation.

We've made significant progress in building those bridges. The many successful relationship tables we've created in the past five years with provincial-territorial organizations and the Métis Nation of Ontario attest to this.

Last summer, nominated by aboriginal leaders, Ontario was actually recognized by the United Nations for its efforts to build stronger relationships with aboriginal people. We were named first among all nominated governments in North America and Europe.

We appreciate that accolade, but it doesn't mean that we don't understand that there's a lot more work that has to be done. That couldn't have been more evident to me, sitting nearly silent with the chief and council in Pikangikum. But I think, if we're patient on all sides, the conversation can continue, and that's what happened there. We were patient, and the conversation developed. Whether we're talking about at that local community level or province-wide, better relationships are part of the accomplishment that our ministry has had to date, and it means that we have to take time and effort.

You'll recall that the second of the ministry's four priorities is improving social conditions. As we drove

away from the band office, I reflected on the fact that barely 25% of the houses in Pikangikum have indoor plumbing. The rows of privies attested to that. Residents collect water at one of the few community spigots, which in January is different than in June. More of the homes' windows were shattered and patched than remained intact, and many of those small wooden houses were home to a dozen or more people and sometimes mould.

Without healthy homes and stable families, it's very difficult for young people to do well in school and to develop as young adults, so improving social conditions has to be part of any integrated approach to creating opportunity in aboriginal communities.

Much of MAA's work to improve social conditions is found in that facilitator role that I mentioned. We work with and advise other ministries on programs for aboriginal people, or how existing programs and services can be better evolved or developed to serve the aboriginal community. Those programs include Tourism, Culture and Sports' healthy eating and after-school programs, Community and Social Services' Ontario Works, and ServiceOntario's successful aboriginal birth registration initiative.

With the Minister of Education, Laurel Broten, I'm the co-lead in a process across ministries to ensure that there's a coordinated response to the recommendations in the strategic framework to end violence against aboriginal women.

We've developed our own innovative, cost-effective and, I would suggest, extremely successful initiatives as well. For example, we initiated Promoting Life-skills in Aboriginal Youth, or, as the acronym is, PLAY. It's a program developed by Right to Play Canada in partnership with the province and other organizations, and I have to give credit to my predecessor minister, Minister Duguid, who really looked for an organization to partner with us on this leadership initiative.

What this program is doing is helping aboriginal youth to improve their health and their self-esteem and leadership skills and really develop skills that will stay with them through their whole lives. Earlier in August, Right to Play provided its latest progress report, and it captures PLAY's key accomplishments up to July 2012. Some of the highlights are these: 889 youth are reached on a weekly basis by the PLAY program; 134 youth-led events across 39 partner communities are part of the program; 80% of youth surveyed report that youth leadership program workshops have been useful in helping to improve self-confidence as leaders; and 32 community mentors are currently participating in the PLAY program.

What happens is, the kids go through a series of leadership programs, and then they have to lead an event in their own community. They have to coordinate and bring together all of the volunteers and all of the community members to put on an event that will benefit the whole community.

I'm being told—oh, I've got 15 minutes left; I'm all right.



I was really pleased to be able to affirm, in July, that our commitment to PLAY is going to continue and that we are going to continue funding at a rate of \$1 million annually for another three years. This is the kind of program that I think really does enable young people to rekindle or kindle their interest in school and in a positive future, and it's one of the programs that is very successful in Pikangikum.

The youth leader is based in the school in Pikangikum, and I want to talk about school just for a moment, because aboriginal education is obviously fundamental to future success. I use the term "school" loosely. The Enchokay Birchstick school in Pikangikum was burned down in 2007. The federal government promised a new one. Five years later, Pikangikum's kids are still getting their lessons in a collection of portables. There are too few to seat everyone who should be getting classes on a daily basis.

We certainly welcomed the August 10 announcement that the federal government will be investing in a new school for the community. It's anticipated that the construction of the new school will take up to five years to complete. That will be essentially a decade in which Pikangikum students haven't had a proper school. That on-reserve infrastructure really is one of the issues where, when I talk about the interaction between federal and provincial jurisdictions, the federal jurisdiction over on-reserve infrastructure is critical. As I explained to the school's principal, MAA works in the areas where we can, but where we need to, we need to bring in that dialogue with the federal government.

0920

Il est important pour nous de continuer à travailler en collaboration avec le ministère de l'Éducation pour promouvoir l'histoire et la culture autochtones dans le curriculum de base de l'Ontario.

I think that talking about the infrastructure in the schools is one thing, but we have to continue to work with the Ministry of Education to promote aboriginal history and culture in Ontario's mainstream curriculum. So it's not just about having a strategy for working on aboriginal kids having more information about their history and culture, but I think it's about mainstream education as well.

If the public were better informed about all of the issues and the history, I think aboriginal communities would feature more prominently on the federal government's political radar, and I think that would lead to more concerted action. Additionally, I think it would mean that there would be a better understanding across our society of our shared history.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education provides targeted funding to support the implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework. That's the policy framework that I just referred to that was launched in 2007 and targets aboriginal students in our schools. It also offers more education for kids who are not of First Nation, Métis or Inuit descent, but it is specifically intended to build the

knowledge base among those kids. But that targeted support includes \$40.2 million in 2012-13 for the First Nation, Métis and Inuit education supplement for the GSN, the grants for student needs, and \$1.19 million annually to the friendship centres to provide additional supports for students such as cultural programs, involvement of elders and counselling.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities provides \$26.4 million per year for aboriginal post-secondary education, and MAA itself committed \$100,000 per year for three years to One Laptop per Child Canada, and that money ends in 2012-13. One Laptop's program provides a low-cost, low-power laptop customized with aboriginal content to every child six to 12 in five participating First Nation communities. And of course there's our successful aboriginal education strategy, which MAA supports.

Under that strategy, we've taken important steps in making system-wide change. We've supported school boards, for example, in confidentially measuring and tracking aboriginal student success so we can have that data to help us understand whether that gap is closing or not. We've increased targeted funding for school boards in support of aboriginal students. We've supported educators through ongoing development of teaching resources in aboriginal education. We've promoted aboriginal content in the curriculum in consultation with aboriginal organizations. We've supported alternative high school and native friendship centres, and we've supported the development of the first textbooks for native studies in Ontario, and they're approved for the Trillium list for use in classrooms.

I'm going to talk just briefly because I know I'm going to run out of time. I'm going to come back to the education issue because I think there probably will be questions about it, but I just want to be clear that if there's any doubt that First Nations kids are committed, that aboriginal kids overall are committed to learning, I think you just have to meet some of these kids—whether they're Métis kids, First Nations kids or Inuit kids—to understand that they are committed.

I had the pleasure of meeting a young grade 12 student named Desmond. I was in Webequie First Nation, and he came with us on the flight back from Webequie. He's a quiet young man from Webequie. He's halfway through his grade 12 studies, and for him, even going to high school means that he has to spend four years away from home, travelling to Thunder Bay. He's committed to getting that education, and I think from our perspective that we owe it to kids like Desmond to make education more accessible for aboriginal communities.

The third pillar of our work is promoting economic opportunity and sustainability. Another event that I was invited to during my Pikangikum visit was an open house for the Whitefeather Forest Initiative. Some of you may have heard of this. Several Ontario ministries have provided significant support for this project. What this project demonstrates is how targeted Ontario funding and programming—in this case, MAA's new relationship

fund—can help support a community's economic sustainability. The Whitefeather Forest Initiative combines the community's ancestral role as stewards of the forest. The elders really were the foundation and the motivators behind this project. The ancestral role as stewards of the forest was combined with economic renewal to support a commercial forestry and tourism initiative. The project was conceived by the elders 15 years ago as a response to the decline in trapping and commercial fishing, and the elders continue to play an important role in guiding this effort.

They are teaching the youth in the community about aboriginal forest stewardship. When I met with the community in the open house about the Whitefeather initiative, there were the elders who had begun the initiative and some young kids who probably were not even born when the initiative began, but they were getting the elders' knowledge of the forest and how the forest regenerates and how best to reforest as part of this initiative.

Most of the youth standing at the edges of the room will benefit from the jobs and economic renewal that this project brings to Pikangikum, but as I say, they weren't born when it started.

My ministry's new relationship fund, another recommendation of the Ipperwash inquiry, provides resources to assist aboriginal communities and organizations across Ontario to create jobs and provide skills training, develop business partnerships and expand economic opportunities.

I see the fund as a catalyst to that kind of change, as sometimes the beginning of the flourishing of these projects. Since it was established in 2008-09, the fund has supported 465 aboriginal projects, has helped to create 480 jobs and has funded administrative and technical training to over 4,300 aboriginal people.

In May, Gary Lipinski—as many of you will know, the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario—told the Premier, “The new relationship fund has been instrumental in creating employment, building relationships with industry and government and enabling business opportunities.”

The fund is just part of a number of tools which are part of our plan to help build aboriginal economies that will be able to sustain aboriginal people and communities into the future.

I am running out of time. On August 14, we held the official launch with the Métis Nation of Ontario to celebrate the Métis voyageur development fund, which is another part of that plan. It's a \$30-million initiative that will help Métis entrepreneurs and Métis-owned companies to flourish.

Another tool that we've put in place is the aboriginal community capital grants program. We support aboriginal small business centres that provide much-needed services. A recent example of that is the small business centre on the Delaware First Nation in southwestern Ontario.

As of March 2012, ministries across the government are encouraged to take part in the aboriginal procurement

pilot. We put that in place, and that is a significant initiative and something that has been asked for by the aboriginal communities.

I will just say that there are some other things that I'd like to come back to: the Algonquin land claim, which I know is of interest to many of you. I think it's an example of the potential benefits of our enhanced settlement and reconciliation process, and I can speak more about that. The draft agreement in principle we hope will be ready this year.

I'd like to talk about the Wabigoon land claim example. I was in Wabigoon Lake earlier this summer and had the opportunity to celebrate a historic agreement and to deliver an apology to the Wabigoon Lake community. I think that's part of the work that we need to do.

I hope you will also ask me about the urban aboriginal population because, as you know, the majority of aboriginal people live off-reserve. Our ministry is very involved with support for friendship centres, for the work of the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Métis Nation of Ontario, all of whom deliver programs in urban contexts.

There's a lot to talk about, there's a lot of work going on, because there are a lot of issues, and if we're going to get to that equity of opportunity, all of these programs and all of the initiatives—because it's not just about programs; it's about the systemic change that needs to take place in order for aboriginal communities to flourish and in order, I would argue, for Ontario to flourish.

**0930**

The Ring of Fire—I'll just end on the Ring of Fire—is a perfect example of all of that coming together, where the systemic changes that we've been making will benefit the processes around the Ring of Fire and there are programs that need to be put in place in order to support First Nations communities in their attempt and their requirement, which I completely support, to be involved in and to benefit from the Ring of Fire. That chromite deposit and the other mineral deposits in northern Ontario are a huge opportunity, and it's something that we are now working together with First Nations and with all of the communities in the north on, to make sure that everyone can benefit.

I think I'm probably just about out of time. Is that true?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You have about a minute left, if you want it.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Do I have a minute? Okay. All right.

I'm just going to end with a quick story, because I was telling you about Pikangikum. I want to take you back to Pikangikum one more time just to end on a note of hope. In June, representatives of the Whitefeather Forest Initiative I talked to you about signed the community's first forest management plan. The following day, the community celebrated the graduation of 11 high school students, and that's a remarkable achievement given the conditions of the school that I mentioned earlier. The community is also working to make progress and is



developing a comprehensive health plan to serve the needs of the community, and we stand in partnership with the community, with initiatives such as the aboriginal healing and wellness strategy. We'll be updating the chief coroner on our work.

In July, with the support of MAA, MCYS and the NGO Let Them Be Kids, the people of Pikangikum gave their kids a gift of their own. In an all-community effort, in one day, the people of Pikangikum built a new playground for the young people. When I was briefed by the coroner's office, when I was first appointed and he briefed me on Pikangikum, he said at the end of his presentation, "These kids don't even have a playground." I turned to my officials and I said, "Can we at least do that?" There's a lot more that's happened in Pikangikum, but there's also been a playground built as a result of the bringing together of all those organizations.

*Interruption.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that, I have to stop you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's a small thing, but it is emblematic. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Excellent.

Please turn off the ringers on the cellphones. It's not the House, but it's not supposed to be done in here, either.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I thought that was maybe the bell that you use to tell ministers to stop, because I haven't been here before.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. It is now the opportunity of the official opposition. You have a half an hour to either make a statement or question the minister as you see fit.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Barrett?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, thank you to my colleague. Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the banana cake. That was a great way to start the morning.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And by the way, there's lots over there. Please eat it.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** If anyone's feeling their blood sugar fall—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Please do.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** That includes guests.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** By way of an opening statement and with the permission of my colleagues, I wish to present a somewhat truncated run-through of some past issues, some decisions that have been made along the Grand River with respect to the Grand River over the years relating to Ojibway Mississauga; more recently relating to the Iroquois, as they were at many times known—the Haudenosaunee; the Five Nations, more recently known as the Six Nations. The reason I would like to do this: We can learn from the past, something that this ministry, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, understands very well.

Decisions and approaches by chiefs, by MPPs, by MPs, cabinet, civil administrators, surveyors can have a far-reaching impact into the future. We have certainly seen this with the more recent deliberations and con-

frontations with respect to Six Nations, and we see this and we will see this on into the future with respect to the Ring of Fire, with respect to the Algonquin land claim, the negotiations there with the Algonquin First Nation and questions that are being raised by residents of that area in that part of eastern Ontario; questions raised more specifically by OFAH, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters; NOTA, the northern Ontario tourism organization; the fishing organizations; and the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association. I know we have many hours to deal with concerns with respect to Algonquin, concerns relating to the secrecy of the negotiations, concerns with respect to the impact on hunting, fishing, parkland, provincial park property values and the economic impact.

I understand that the process with respect to Algonquin will result in or develop an economic impact study. In fact, that's something that should be done with respect to the Grand River and what has occurred in that part of southern Ontario. I do wish to go back to the Grand River and talk a bit about the historical perspective of some of those deliberations. Again, this is part of the job of this particular ministry and other government bodies, and they've kind of morphed into a number of different structures over, actually, several hundred years—probably close to 250 years.

Particularly, the focus of the last six and a half years—we only have half an hour, so I doubt that I will get up to the point of the last six and a half years, something that has been discussed at length in our Ontario Legislature, before the estimates committee. I think the last run-through would have been with one of your predecessors, Michael Bryant, and much of that, as I recall, was with respect to the economic impact on the city of Brantford and Caledonia and area—and not only Caledonia; it's Haldimand county, it's Brantford-Brant county.

We know that in the media there are concerns as far north as up to the source of the Grand River, in the Hurdale area, with respect to—I think there's a fertilizer plant.

Minister, you indicated, I think it was in February, that you are getting all parties together. I think you were focusing specifically on the subdivision in Caledonia, Douglas Creek Estates. I don't wish to dwell on that right now.

I do wish to attempt to summarize, as I've said, what's gone on before. There are so many books; there are so many references. There's a tremendous history of the Six Nations alone—a tremendous history. The military history is very significant. The First World War: a very small community, and well over 300 people signed up to fight in the First World War. At one time, I was a member of the Six Nations veterans' association—a very proud history just on that area alone. It's a community that provides a leadership role for native communities in North America—and South America, for that matter.

Much of my presentation draws on a summary, an ongoing summary—and you, Minister, and your staff would be aware of some of this work by a former Ontario

government employee, Garry Horsnell. I have one of his documents here. I'd be glad to distribute it to the committee. My assistant is here. He could pull it off the email and we could distribute it. I don't know whether there's a rush to get it right now. I'll just hit some of the highlights. Maybe I'll ask the question.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** If you are going to refer to it, it would be nice if all members had it.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, okay. It will take a minute to run up and grab it and pull it off. I wasn't sure. I'd be glad to distribute it, because it includes references and sources that I think may be of interest to the research of this committee.

**0940**

Mr. Horsnell has pulled together his version of events. He's been very public about this over at least the last six years. We go back to the mid-1600s. Many will know that at that time—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Chair, just to help me understand, what is the position of the individual you're referring to?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** He's retired. He lives in Brantford.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** He was a civil servant?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** As I understand it, yes.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Okay, thank you.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** This is a private citizen. I just thought I would mention that, because I've gotten to know him at meetings and—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Going back to the mid-1600s, the Iroquois—when I say that, I refer to what are now the Six Nations on this side of the border, who were from what is now upper New York state, and again, when you go back 250 years, there were different jurisdictions and different names for the jurisdictions—had conquered native people around them as far west as Chicago and had dispersed and virtually eliminated—I know they did eliminate the tobacco people, the Petun, down in my area, in the Norfolk area, the Neutral Indians, and battles with the indigenous Huron.

In the mid-1690s, the Mississauga Ojibwa fought with and pushed the invading Iroquois out of what is now southern and southwestern Ontario to their homeland in what is now New York state. A peace was made, and they gave up the land in what is now southern Ontario to the Mississauga Ojibwa.

According to a 2003 Indian land claims commission report, "The offer of peace was accepted in June 1700"—I'll do this in chronological order—"and as a result, the Mississaugas secured their control of the territory between Lake Huron and Lake Ontario. They would occupy these lands until the land cessions of the late 18th and early 19th centuries confined them to a very small proportion of their former territory."

On July 19, 1701, 20 chiefs from the Five, later Six, Nations Iroquois Confederacy signed or placed their marks or totems on the so-called Nanfan Treaty—this has been raised in the Legislature. It's named after Sir John Nanfan, who was then acting governor of the British

province of New York. The Iroquois gave up their beaver hunting grounds to the British crown. Quoting the chiefs, "We ... surrender, deliver up and forever quit claim" to this huge tract of land that they had previously conquered on condition that the British would allow Five Nations people to hunt on the land forever. This is of relevance for other native-related issues as well.

Now, at that Nanfan Treaty meeting in 1701, a New York surveyor named Samuel Clowes produced a map showing that the Nanfan Treaty land included land in what is now southwestern Ontario and along the Grand River. This is in the British archives.

Some people question the validity of the 1701 Nanfan Treaty. If the Six Nations had already surrendered the land in what is now southern and southwestern Ontario to the Mississauga Ojibwa, whether it had been surrendered a year earlier in June 1701, why is a treaty signed when the land had been surrendered to another native group? Regardless, surrendered land, including the land along the Grand River, to the British crown in 1701.

Fast-forward to October 7, 1763: King George III issued a royal proclamation in which the crown defined Indian territory in North America and reserved "sovereignty, protection and dominion" over that Indian territory. Again, this included land along the Grand River and this would include land in the Algonquin area.

Six Nations Iroquois agreed to accept the 1763 royal proclamation according to a treaty signed at Fort Niagara on July 8, 1764.

Go forward 10 years: In 1774, the British Parliament passed the Quebec Act. It extended the British province of Quebec through what is now Ontario; again, that shows that the land along the Grand River was in British territory.

The American Revolution was very significant for the Six Nations people. And for my family by the way: My real name is not Toby. I'm Theobald Butler. Our family was kicked out of New York state, along with the Dockstaders and so many of the families on the Six Nations.

After the American Revolution, Quebec Governor Haldimand arranged to buy a huge parcel of land, including land along the Grand River, from the Ojibwa Mississauga Indians and, as I understand it, also the Chippewa—I think they were closer to the Niagara River.

On May 22, 1784—and I know I'm moving very quickly through many decades of history—the Mississauga Indians did "grant, bargain, sell, alien, release, and confirm" to the British Crown "forever," for the sum of "1,180 pounds, seven shillings and fourpence of lawful money of Great Britain," land including land along the Grand River. It went to the crown; it was purchased by the crown.

There was a meeting, again at Fort Niagara. Crown representatives, Mohawk leader Joseph Brant—we recognize that name—other Six Nations Indian chiefs, Delaware chiefs and Mississauga chiefs were all present at that meeting, and they all agreed with the sale of the land to the British crown.

That purchase is now called the 1784 Between the Lakes Purchase, and at that point, the land, including the



land along the Grand River, became crown-owned land bought and paid for by the crown.

Governor Haldimand issued an announcement on October 25, 1784, inviting “Mohawks” and “others of the Six Nations” from New York to move from the “American States” to the “British” and “to take possession of”—Garry Horsnell says, in brackets, “occupy”—part of the Between the Lakes Purchase six miles wide on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. The source is in the Dundalk area.

Haldimand’s document was a unilateral announcement. He was an agent of the crown, the governor. He was the only one that signed the document, other than his secretary R. Mathews. It was not signed by any Six Nations person, was not a treaty in any conventional sense of the term. It was not an official proclamation, was not presented in public on the three separate occasions as required by crown rules and instructions. He did not apply the great seal of the province of Quebec to the document. Haldimand’s document is not considered a patent or a deed, again, from the perspective of Garry Horsnell, who has summarized a lot of this material. In his view, the Haldimand announcement was simply a licence from the governor of Quebec for Six Nations people to occupy crown-owned land—it was owned by the crown—until a final, legal land transfer could be made.

In 1791, the British Parliament passed the Constitutional Act, according to this, which divided the former British province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada. Again, Upper Canada became Ontario, and again it shows that the land along the Grand River was British territory.

Now, to correct Haldimand’s mistakes, Governor Simcoe offered the Six Nations a letter patent, a deed, in 1793 which would have allowed them to occupy a strip of the crown’s land six miles wide on each side of the Grand River from the mouth at Lake Erie to the northern boundary near Elora, not as far as Dundalk.

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Again, the Simcoe deed or patent was a unilateral announcement from an agent of the crown. On November 24, 1796, Joseph Brant indicated, “It does not appear from this grant we are entitled to call these lands our own,” and would not accept this deed. Brant and the Six Nations chiefs refused to accept the Simcoe patent, or deed, and there it lay; the land remained crown-owned land. Much of this came up very recently in a decision by Justice Arrell in Brantford in 2009.

As time passed after 1793, Brant and other chiefs surrendered Six Nations use of various parcels of the crown land back to the crown for sale. Eventually, Six Nations ended up on the Six Nations reserve; it’s officially known as a reserve. It’s the former Tuscarora township down in Brant county. This was around 1850.

Six Nations didn’t surrender the land; they surrendered the ability to use the crown land. The crown said they would put money from the sale into a trust fund for the use and benefit of the Six Nations of the Grand River.

In 1995, just to fast-forward, the elected Six Nations band council took the Canadian federal government and the Ontario provincial government to court and filed a statement of claim. According to the claim, Six Nations wants an accounting of money and it wants the crown to “replace all assets or value thereof which ought to have been received or held by the crown on behalf of the Six Nations.”

I do apologize for the history. I appreciate getting that in Hansard. Again, this is the perspective of Garry Horsnell. It puts into place the history from his perspective. This will be distributed with the references and sources. As David Peterson said to me when he came down to Caledonia, probably six years ago—he was asked by the Premier—he indicated something to the effect of, “I thought this was an accounting issue.” That’s my understanding as a trained lawyer. We were speaking with John Tory, as I recall, another trained lawyer. The perspective was that this was an accounting claim. This is something that the provincial Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs would deal with in co-operation with the federal government. As we all know, things morphed into an awful lot of other issues: policing issues, justice issues, issues of democracy itself, governmental issues, how we deal with this, and, of course, road closures and the mayhem and what we see down there. The burned-out tractor-trailer still sits at the entrance of that subdivision that has been occupied for the last six and a half years. I know the Premier made it very clear a few months ago that he considers it an alleged occupation. The barricades are still up, in spite of the fact that Mr. Peterson struck an agreement—I assume it was a verbal agreement—that the barricades come down in return for transfer of land, transfer of the Burch property in Brant county.

I probably won’t take up any more time. I just wanted to leave that. I appreciate the opportunity to present that in the context. I think it’s very important, as we go forward with the Grand River issues, the Algonquin land claim, for example, the Ring of Fire—and I hope there is somewhat of a rebuttal to this version of the history, but it’s so important that we consider what went on before in the case of the proud history of the Six Nations. I think they went back about 250 years. We know that 250 years from now, God willing, we will be discussing Six Nations and we will be discussing Algonquin. This continues. These issues are passed on to the next guy. I see that in my readings of history—the thought processes that I went through and I saw other people going through. Just with Caledonia alone, I could see the same kinds of deliberations being made 200 years ago—we were a colony at that time—by civil authorities. In many cases, I could see the strategy of delay, the strategy of secrecy and, quite simply, Chair, oftentimes to leave it for the next guy or the next gal.

In this case, much of the responsibility remains with the minister at the witness table today.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Thank you. There are about seven minutes left if the official opposition wants to use it.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** May we use it for questions?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Absolutely. It's your seven minutes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Good morning, Minister.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Good morning.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** A question for you: It's well known that the current situation in Caledonia is holding up a \$100-million transmission line project that would supply power to the surrounding area. Have you had the opportunity to address this issue with native occupiers in your recent visits to Caledonia?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to respond to that question and also to make a bit of a comment on what your colleague spoke about, which is related.

I just want to start with, "In 250 years, we'll be dealing with Six Nations." I wanted to start with that statement because I think you can turn that around and you can say, "In 250 years, First Nations will still be dealing with us." I think that statement actually reveals a lot about how we have interacted as peoples in this land. If you think about it from the other perspective, the perspective of First Nations people, we've interrupted a lot of their history, and our histories have become entwined. I just want to start with that.

The second comment I want to make is to acknowledge what Mr. Barrett talked about in terms of the role of First Nations in our shared conflicts. The War of 1812 has just been celebrated and remarked and marked. The role of First Nations in the War of 1812 was significant.

Having said that, in response to your question, Mr. Nicholls, since I was appointed, I've met with the Six Nations' elected chief. I've met with the mayors of Brant, the city of Brantford, Haldimand county. I've met with the Haudenosaunee, the confederacy. I have worked to try to bring together, or be a catalyst for, a conversation on these very complex issues. I think the history that Mr. Barrett outlined from one person's perspective really does speak to how complex these issues are. The very fact that right now the Six Nations have 28 land and accounting claims outstanding, and there hasn't been a conversation for a number of years and the federal government doesn't acknowledge that there is a claim—I think that is, again, symbolic of the complexity, and I'm not going to wade into what is or isn't true, where the truth lies. I think that in order for us to get to that, there has to be a conversation, there has to be some discussion, and there hasn't been any.

Have I met with people in the community to try to say, "Let's find a way to have a conversation"? Yes, I have. I believe that it's extremely important in my role to play that kind of role and not to take a side and not to say that there is blame going only one way, but to find a way to bring people together and to find the shared and common interest.

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**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So what are they saying? What are you hearing them say with regard to this issue? Because, as you just mentioned, it has been going on for a while.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I'm actually hearing everybody say is that in some ways there is more frustration than there is anything else, and I would say that pretty much on all sides: that there is frustration with the current situation. But I think that everyone also acknowledges—and I haven't met with every single individual obviously, but the leadership that I have met with is sincere in trying to move the piece of the agenda that is most critical to them forward, and obviously there are a whole bunch of pieces. You've talked about an economic development initiative, a power initiative. We can talk about the use of the Douglas Creek estate lands. We can talk about the relationship in the community. We can talk about the land claim issues. There is a confluence of issues in that community, and each one complicates the other.

So what I've tried to do is, I've tried to say: Let's at least find a way to come together to talk, to identify an issue, for example, the use of the Douglas Creek property. Maybe we could have that conversation. We haven't got there yet. You know, I haven't been successful in that, but I have managed to speak with all of the players, and my hope is that building trust will eventually lead to fruitful conversation.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** We take a look at—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Just over a minute.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, fine. Thanks.

This has been going on for about six years now, I guess, and I know that the OPP have had a lot of officers down in Caledonia. Do you have any idea what it has cost the taxpayer right now, with regard to having this added security in dealing with the issues that have taken place?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The first thing that I will say is that, just be very clear that we do not direct the OPP, so in terms of their activities and how they respond, we do not direct them.

We have an itemized review of the costs. You can take a look at those. I'm not sure exactly what number you might want, but the total provincial cost is about \$64 million. The police operations is \$45.8 million.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I say, that's on our website.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Chair, I'll just jump in.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** There is no time.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Did everyone get a copy of the document?

**Interjections:** Yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, we did.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And there are extra copies as well.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I would appreciate feedback from that. That's the perception of one, I would say, amateur historian. I would request some feedback. Perhaps the committee might consider some—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Well, we have the minister here for another six and a half hours—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'll come back to that.



**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):**—so if you have questions, I'm sure she'll answer them.

Mr. Vanthof, the floor is now yours, and you have about 10 minutes now and the remainder of your time this afternoon.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for the history lesson. It's nice to hear—a part of the province that I'm not really familiar with, and I'd like to thank you, Minister, for your presentation.

I'd like to focus on a couple of things that you focused on: your role as a facilitator, which I think is very important; quality of opportunity for First Nations is incredibly important; and education is also something I'd like to focus on.

First, I'd like to put into context First Nations from my personal point of view. My riding contains Temagami, the Temagami land caution. I'm sure anyone aware of First Nations knows part of the story of the Temagami land caution, and one of the things that echoed when you said "frustration"—frustration on all sides.

But there are some things that my riding contains that a lot of people don't know. There's a mine about to open up in my riding that is, to the best of my knowledge, the first and only mining company owned wholly by First Nations. So when people say—and I'm going to continue in that tone, and there are people who are frustrated—"All they," meaning First Nations, "want to do is stop development," that's untrue. That's very untrue.

But having said that, the First Nations face problems—and the remote First Nations are a whole different can of worms. Right now I'd like to focus on the First Nations that are in my neck of the woods, which some people would consider remote, but don't tell me that. In the case of the Wahgoshig First Nation—it was actually the first case that came across my desk as a newly elected MPP—a company was drilling on what they felt was their land. They went to MNDM to complain. MNDM issued a letter, which I can provide, advising the company to stop drilling. What happened? The company kept drilling. So the First Nation went to court, got an injunction and stopped the company from drilling.

The First Nations are obviously frustrated, because they went to court to do this. But the company is also frustrated, and I think the reason for the frustration is that it's one thing to have a role as a facilitator, but there are no clear guidelines of whose role. The companies are expected to deal one-on-one with First Nations, the First Nations are expected to deal one-on-one with the companies, and everyone kind of just sits back and hopes it works out. I'm not going to ask that question right now, but it's something that's very important here: What is actually the role beyond facilitator? Because, in this case, Chief Babin is very, very frustrated, and I'm sure the company owner is equally frustrated. And they're both frustrated at the government—our government—because we control natural resources, especially when they had the letter in their hands saying, "Okay, MNDM would like you to stop drilling," and nothing happened.

That's one of the big hurdles we're going to have to get over, because with a new development like the Ring

of Fire—and we all hope the Ring of Fire is developed—we have different views on where it will be processed or how it will be done, but I don't think there's anyone in this room who wants to stop development of the Ring of Fire. But if you have, in the case with Chief Babin, and Chief Babin and his contemporaries have letters from MNDM saying, "Stop," and nothing happens, how are they expected to believe that your government is truly going to allow them to be a partner in the Ring of Fire when it doesn't happen in little cases now? My dad always taught me: If you're going to do a big deal with somebody, do a little deal first, and if the little deal works out, you know that his handshake is okay in the big deal. But in the case of Wahgoshig, it's not there. They did the right thing. They went to MNDM, and MNDM said the right thing too, but nothing happened.

We're going to get back to that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So you don't want me to answer that, as much as I would like to?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** We'll get back to that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** All right. I made a note.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** And it's not that. That case went before the courts, but that case, to us and to the First Nations I speak to, is a bellwether, and I hope you do get back to that.

It's not all bad news. We've got a wholly owned First Nations mining company. It hasn't gotten a lot of press yet, but Temagami First Nation signed an agreement with a mining company. They want to, but the level of trust isn't there. If you're going to be a partner with somebody, you have to be a dependable partner. Sometimes it's not going to be easy, but they have to be able to know, on all sides—and that's the mining companies, the First Nations and the residents. I've got the head of the prospectors and developers in my riding, and he's not always on the side of the First Nations. He's frustrated. He's frustrated because we're unwilling or we use a lot of really good words, but when the flint hits the stone, the words aren't always followed up by action.

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I think, to comment on Mr. Barrett's—I think that has probably been throughout history. And to your comment, it's not us dealing with the First Nations or the First Nations dealing with us; what we want and what they want is, they want us all to work together as one. We can get there, because in my riding, in areas, we have got there, despite some of the things that we've done, and despite some of things that they've done because they're frustrated. That's one thing.

With the Ring of Fire, for that to proceed, and to proceed without—I might be stepping over, but I don't see anyone from the First Nations here to say it. But I think a lot of First Nations see the Ring of Fire as their last stand on development in Ontario. Because there have been so many problems on both sides throughout our history, I think they have a right to see that as their last stand. They want to be partners, and partners are part of the decision-making process. Partners aren't told after what the decisions are, and, "Oh, we're happy to co-operate and I

see myself as a facilitator, but this is the decision. Live with it." If we keep that *modus operandi* up, I think we can expect problems with the Ring of Fire, and I don't think anyone in this room wants that.

That's why—I'm going to go to questions. Those are long-term. If you're going to look out 10, 20, 30 years, two years, those are the long-term issues. Because to be truly one, to move forward on things like the Ring of Fire, to move forward on the gold development that's around Matheson—that is being held up because no one wants to lay out the rules. But short-term, we've got, and I think both in far remote—"truly" is the word I'm going to use, truly remote areas, as opposed to perceived remote areas like mine. I got a crash course too, because I went this February to Attawapiskat. The thing that struck me most at Attawapiskat: The conditions were horrible. I don't think anyone is going to deny that. But the people were—I don't know if there's a word I can describe it with, but if the conditions in Attawapiskat were happening in my riding, there would be a revolt. There would be what's happening there.

The one thing in your presentation, and that's going to be my first question, regarding education: I know that on First Nations reserves, education is federal. Fine. Even on other issues, I have people coming into my office, and I have to say, "I'm sorry; that's a federal issue," or, "That's a municipal issue and you can go someplace else." I don't like doing it even for other things. But in the case of education at Attawapiskat, there comes a point where, if one level of government isn't doing it, is it enough to just say, "We can't"? I know about fiscal restraint; I know all that. We will have those arguments for a long time and we will fight each other and work together, but at the end of the day—and I'll give you an example. During that whole Attawapiskat issue, when the feds wanted to put in a third party management, the kids who were going to high school in Timmins were going to have their funds cut off, so that was it for their education. Have we reached a point where enough is enough? When are we going to reach a point when we no longer—because, you know what? I don't think the current fed government is really going to take this issue seriously. I could be wrong; I've been wrong before. But when are we truly going to say, "Okay, enough is enough"? And to truly move remote First Nations ahead, we're going to have to take the bull by the horns.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So I think that is a question.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes. Sorry for being so long-winded.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'll just speak to the education issue and then I hope we'll be able to come back to the consultation issue and the mining—just to say that the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines will be coming before you, so you will be able to explore some of those mining issues in greater detail, but I would like to comment on the consultation issue.

On education, I think that we've been pretty clear, Mr. Vanthof, that we're very interested in being part of the

solution around education. Already, I think I said in my remarks that I'm working with the Ministry of Education to find a way to work with First Nations, so there's a provincial-government-to-First-Nation conversation that needs to happen. But I don't think it's as simple as, well, the provincial government just takes over education on-reserve, because that leaves out the key partner, which is First Nations. The reality is, if you look at the work that's going on right now, for example with the Union of Ontario Indians; right now, the Union of Ontario Indians, 39 First Nations—I think I've got that number right—are having a bilateral conversation with the federal government and a bilateral conversation with the provincial government on how to create a new model of education delivery and how to make sure that the curriculum that they have created and the resources that they need are in place, both in terms of professional development and those kinds of educational curricular resources and also the infrastructure and the operating dollars that the federal government has responsibility for. So we are part of that conversation.

Right now, our ministry is working with the Ministry of Education and we've got staff who are doing a bit of a listening tour to listen to and talk to First Nations about how they would like to move forward. What are the issues that are most pressing? I think one of the areas that we've got to move on very quickly is the transition. You raised the issue of kids going from reserve to high school in off-reserve communities. Those kids don't do well, so we've got to find a way to interrupt that failure cycle, because there are a lot of reasons they don't do well. They don't do well maybe because they haven't gotten the basics that they needed on-reserve, but also, they don't do well because there isn't a systematic and solid parent surrogacy in place in the community that they arrive in: who is watching out for them, who is making sure there is a place for them to do homework—those kinds of things. Then, what is the curriculum that they are being delivered?

We're working on a number of fronts, both in terms of education self-governance with some communities, looking for other communities that might want to have that conversation with us, as well as: Are we managing those transitions? And how can we support the teachers on-reserve? Because, you know, the provincial government runs 5,000 schools, and we run them very well, in my opinion. The resources that we have at the provincial level really should be available, in my opinion, to those educators.

I was struck, when I was in Pikangikum, that the principal was dealing with mould in the teacherages, and she was dealing with a whole lot of personnel issues. I called her after I got back to Toronto and said, "Who do you talk to when you're having these concerns?" Really, she has to talk to INAC—or what it's called? AANDC—the federal office. There's no education community of which she's a part that can give her the support that she needs. So there are loose networks, and there are some of those resources in place, but they're not systematic enough,



they're not prevalent enough, and we need to support the development of those kinds of resources. That's what we're doing.

I don't think the answer, even if we had—put the fiscal restraint aside. Let's say we had all the money in the world. I honestly don't believe the answer is that the provincial government say, "We're going to take over where the federal government left off." That is as disrespectful, I think, as other parts of our history have been.

I'm determined to find a way forward on this. We've got good people who have been hired specifically to work on this file, both in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and I think it is one of those issues that is a top priority. It certainly came up in our meetings with the Premier and the First Nations and aboriginal leaders: Education is a top priority. When I met with the Treaty No. 3 youth council up in Kenora a couple of weeks ago, education and exposure to opportunity was what they talked to me about, so it's the top of my priority list.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop right there. You will have additional time when we come back.

It now being 10:20 of the clock, we are recessed until this afternoon at approximately 3:45, at the end of routine proceedings.

*The committee recessed from 1020 to 1559.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We are here to resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, vote 2001. When the committee recessed this morning, Mr. Vanthof had 13 minutes left of his 30-minute opening statement or questions. After that, the minister will have 30 minutes to reply, and then we'll go into rotation until 6 o'clock.

Mr. Vanthof, the floor is yours.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Chair. I believe that when we broke, we were talking about education in the remote First Nations and if someone is going to step up to the plate. By "stepping up to the plate," I don't think I was saying we should impose a solution, because that's been the problem we've done—our society has done—to our neighbours for a long, long time. We're not talking about imposing a solution.

But there is a problem. The average First Nation child receives \$2,000 to \$3,000 less per capita for their education than the rest of Ontario's children, and the standard answer for a long time has been, "Well, it's federal." But I've been there. I've been to Attawapiskat, and they're at the point that, to them, it doesn't matter who it is; we're all failing them. So my question again is: How can we overcome this, because every day is a day lost?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You're not going to get any argument from me that there isn't an issue. There absolutely is an issue, which is why we've made it a priority. It was in our throne speech that we are very interested in pursuing a better education opportunity for aboriginal children across the province, on-reserve and off-reserve, so the fact that we have the aboriginal education strategy in place, that we are working with in-

dividual First Nations to try to work toward a different model and the fact that within our ministry, and working with the Ministry of Education, we are looking for ways of beginning that conversation.

I think the other thing is that as part of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group—I mentioned in my opening remarks that the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group is the national gathering of ministers of aboriginal affairs, as well as national aboriginal group—and closing that gap between aboriginal academic achievement and non-aboriginal academic achievement is a priority for us—improving those graduation rates. So it's something that across the country we are looking for ways of improving and looking for best practices and sharing those ideas.

At the most recent meeting, which I guess was last fall, I had an exchange with National Chief Shawn Atleo, and we were talking about whether there was one model that should fit the whole country or whether it had to be a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction discussion, and I think we agreed that there are differences from province to province, there are differences within each province, as to the relationship between the provincial governments and the First Nations communities, so I think that there does need to be a sensitivity to those jurisdictional differences.

In some ways it would be easy to say, "We're going to create this model, and this is what's going to pertain," but, as you said, imposing on the First Nations a model that hasn't grown up as a result of collaboration I think is not the way we should go. So we're going to continue to work with First Nations partners. There's good work being done, and we're going to continue to lend our resources and bring our resources to the table in those conversations while, at the same time, finding ways to bring to bear the knowledge and experience and weight of the provincial education system on the experience of young people.

I'll just give you an example. I mentioned that I had been to meet with the Treaty 3 youth council, and we did talk about education a fair bit. One of the things that they said to me is that they are very interested in finding ways of being exposed to different opportunities—co-op education, for example; those kinds of things that may happen more readily in provincial schools. It was interesting, because they went back to the language of Treaty 3 where there is language about, "You give me one of your children and I'll take one of yours," and that exchange of experience. The young people were referring to that, and what they were saying was, "We want more opportunities. We want to have an exposure to a whole range of employment opportunities, for example, in different parts of the province, and we think that non-aboriginal kids would want to have the experience of learning more about us and more about our life."

I think that's an area, for example, that the provincial education system might be able to assist. I'm not making a commitment to a particular program, but I think it's those kinds of conversations that then give us sort of a mutual insight into how we might move forward. The next time that I meet with them, I hope I'm going to be

able to take some suggestions for how we might be able to work with them, because kids in our provincial schools have the opportunity to do co-op programs, to be in different places other than just in the classroom, and so we need to figure out how to provide those kinds of opportunities to kids on-reserve. And I agree with you that that's not a particular order of government responsibility; that's all of our responsibility.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** You've said a lot of good things, but, at the end of the day, is there a date or a time when we say, "Okay, we've done the conversations; here's one step," at least for one place, and Attawapiskat is my example—we're not going to go back there. How about when we have a mine development—and this is also an education issue—and First Nations want to be part of it? They also want to work. We all want to work. We all want to be fruitful.

There are some—in my riding also—very successful job-training programs. I can name the companies. I'm not going to, but I can name the companies that do a really good job, but there are also very terrible ones. In a lot of cases, it's written into the agreement but it's an afterthought, so the mine is already operating by the time the training program starts.

It's nice to talk about it here, with suits and ties, but back on the land, it's not so nice, and once again, it breeds distrust, and it's very hard to get rid of that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, I completely agree with you, and I want to read you a bit of a letter, because I think that statement about the upfront need to make those kinds of commitments is very important. Certainly in terms of the Ring of Fire—we use that as the example—from the very beginning of our conversations—I travelled to Webequie in the winter, and one of the first things the folks at Webequie raised with me was that they were looking for training opportunities. They were actually looking for training opportunities in their community, because they want people from the community to be able to take part in the Ring of Fire.

This is a letter that was sent to a number of chiefs of First Nations by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. It was sent on August 3, and the subject is, "Moving Forward on Ring of Fire Dialogue." I'm not going to read the whole thing, but to this point, Mr. Vanthof, I just want to read the section on "Regional Infrastructure and Social Supports." This is Rick Bartolucci writing to a number of chiefs. He said:

"You have told us that all-weather access roads, electricity transmission, broadband connectivity, education and training opportunities and other social supports are vitally important to your communities in preparing for proposed development. That is why we must work together to move the tripartite process forward, with the federal government at the table. I have asked Deborah Richardson, assistant deputy minister, trilateral process, infrastructure development and community readiness, to work with you to advance this agenda and to provide the necessary foundation for fruitful discussions with Ontario, the federal government and First Nation communities as equal partners in this endeavour."

So there is already a memorandum of co-operation in place with Webequie First Nation. The minister, who I believe will be here to speak to you, will be able to speak to you in more detail about the conversations he's having right now. But the point I want to make is that training is part of that upfront commitment. It is absolutely part of what we know has to happen. The fact is, we're at the beginning of those dialogues, and training is already there as part of the commitment.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I do take you at your word, Minister, and I hope that that is truly the case in the Ring of Fire.

We spoke earlier about the Wahgoshig First Nation. I'm just going to read part of this letter from MNDM to the company, and then we can discuss it. It's to Mr. Stretch.

"The ministry was contacted by Chief Babin of WFN late this afternoon. He expressed grave concern that Solid Gold had moved its diamond drill rig to a new site, which the chief believed is closer to the community, without any advance notice to WFN. He was extremely upset and stated that your company's conduct is leaving the First Nation no choice but to proceed to court to seek an injunction to stop the drill program."

This is the important part: "The ministry continues to believe that consultation to date regarding your exploration program has been inadequate given concerns that WFN has raised about potential impacts on its aboriginal and treaty rights, and we must repeat"—we must repeat—"our earlier request that Solid Gold suspend its drilling program immediately until the ministry is satisfied that appropriate consultation has occurred."

I'm not going to read the whole letter either, but if you go to the next page: "Your co-operation now is essential. The crown is obligated to ensure that adequate consultation occurs. Please confirm immediately whether Solid Gold is prepared to stand down its current drilling activity and, in any event, provide us with a more detailed description of your current work program and your planned or possible next steps on the project."

At the start of the letter the ministry has asked Solid Gold to stop and it hasn't complied, and at the end of the letter, it's already backing down. And you wonder why First Nations have trouble believing that the government is actually up to the plate with them? Because in the middle it says, "our earlier request that Solid Gold suspend its drilling program immediately," and at the end of the letter, "please let us know what's happening."

So my question is—perhaps Minister Bartolucci would better answer it—why didn't they stop drilling?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister Bartolucci will be able to answer that question in more detail, but I want to give you just a bit of a status report. As you know, this case is before the court.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

1610

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** On January 3, 2012, the Ontario Superior Court granted an injunction sought by Wahgoshig First Nation against Solid Gold Resources.



The court's order prohibits Solid Gold from carrying out any further exploration work on its Legacy project for 120 days from the date of the order. On January 16, 2012, Ontario received a statement of claim by which Wahgoshig First Nation has commenced a legal proceeding against the province and Solid Gold Resources, seeking both damages and a declaration that the Mining Act is unconstitutional.

On January 19, 2012, Solid Gold issued a press release indicating that they are seeking to appeal the January 3, 2012, decision. Solid Gold Resources also has notified Ontario of its intent to commence legal proceedings against the province.

That is where we are now. I'm going to let Minister Bartolucci speak to whatever he can, although, because it's before the courts, I don't think he'll be able to say much more. What I do want to say to you is: If we go up to 10,000 feet, just in terms of consultation, our government is committed to meeting its duty to consult with First Nations and Métis communities, and I think that our approach to consultation has reflected our current understanding of the protection provided for aboriginal treaty rights by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** With that, I'm going to stop you, although you can continue because you're now into your time. You can do whatever you want. You have half an hour.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay. I want to just finish this point. Our provincial ministries are consulting, Mr. Vanthof. We're consulting with First Nations and Métis communities on a whole range of activities and initiatives, and we've been incorporating provisions around consultation and ensuring consultation with aboriginal people in key pieces of legislation: things like the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009; the Far North Act, 2010; and the Mining Amendment Act, 2009. That is, I think, evidence of our commitment to consult.

We've developed guidelines. In 2006, we produced draft guidelines for ministries on consultation with aboriginal people related to aboriginal rights and treaty rights. That was to assist those ministries as they developed their own relationships with First Nations and aboriginal people.

This is an evolving reality and it's an evolving expertise. I don't think that we are there yet, and certainly as a culture we're not there yet, because it's not just about government. As this case demonstrates, it's about the private sector; it's about government; it's about those relationships with First Nations. We're going to continue to work on that. I think, as you said in your first commentary, everybody did what they were supposed to do, but still it went wrong, and so that's how it has ended up before the courts.

I now have a bit of time to speak to some issues that I didn't have a chance to speak to. Is that right, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** About 27 minutes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** About 27 minutes; there you go.

I want to touch on three issues that I didn't speak to in any detail. The first one is the issue around Grassy

Narrows, and then I want to speak a little bit on the Algonquin land claim, and then I want to speak a little bit on the Ring of Fire.

I'll start with the Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations. The issue there, as many of you will know, is mercury contamination. I'm picking some issues that I know have either been in the news or are issues that people may have questions about. They're issues that have been of concern to me, so I want to bring you up to speed on where we are.

As you may or may not know, Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations are communities that are dealing with the impacts of mercury poisoning that dates back decades. On July 31, I visited Grassy Narrows, and I visited to restart the discussion about working towards solutions on a range of issues that I'll come to. I'll talk about that visit in a moment, but I just want to talk a little bit about the background of the issue.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the pulp mill in Dryden caused mercury pollution in the English and Wabigoon River system. In 1970, commercial fishing was banned in the river system because of mercury contamination. In November 1985, the Grassy Narrows First Nation and Wabaseemoong First Nation reached an out-of-court settlement with the Ontario government, the federal government and the two paper companies, which were Reed Inc. and Great Lakes Forest Products.

Access to safe and healthy food obviously is an absolute requirement for all Ontarians. What I have said to the members of Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations is that I am very concerned about their ongoing issues. I know that there are outstanding issues regarding the mercury levels in the river and then in compensation as well. It's a food issue but it's also an economic development issue. It's an economic sustainability issue because the fish formed the basis of the economy of these communities.

Our role in this: The Ontario government monitors contaminants in Ontario fish and we provide consumption information to the public through a guide to eating sports fish which is accessible at many retail outlets, and it's also available through the Ministry of the Environment website. Both the MNR—the Ministry of Natural Resources—and the Ministry of the Environment are responsible for coordination and collection and testing of the fish. The monitoring includes the lakes on the English River near the communities of Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong between 1970 and 2010; annually until the late 1980s and then every two to five years after that, so the monitoring changed.

The mercury levels in the fish located in lakes surrounding Grassy Narrows are decreasing or they're stable. The concentrations vary by species but the mercury levels in the fish that are most desirable to the community members—that is, walleye and northern pike—those contamination levels still exceed Health Canada recommendations. For that reason, there's still a consumption advisory on the fish.

I said there was an issue around compensation. There's what's called a mercury disability board. Since

1986, the mercury disability fund benefits have been paid to Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nation members who demonstrate symptoms that are consistent with mercury poisoning. Total payment from the fund, from its inception to July 31, 2012, is \$16,022,240. As of July 2012, the mercury disability fund provided disability benefits to 162 adults and 22 children of the Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations.

My ministry leads a cross-ministry team that's made up of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, MNR and the Ministry of the Environment to address issues around health, around mercury contamination and fish testing and economic development. In June 2011, MAA staff met with Chief Fobister to hear the community's concerns. MAA staff offered to arrange a meeting of the chief and council with MOH, with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Environment in attendance, regarding the report that had been put in place that had been released by the Japanese mercury expert, Dr. Masazumi Harada. I give you that all as background. That was June 2011 that there was an offer to meet and hear the concerns.

On June 6 of this year there was a fish fry that took place on the Queen's Park lawn. Some of you may remember that or have been aware of that. I visited the fish fry and it was hosted by Grassy Narrows mothers. The people who were there, a number of young people, had walked from Grassy Narrows to Queen's Park. They had been accompanied by some of the elders from the community and from their families, and I felt it was really important to speak directly with these young people and their families who had walked to Queen's Park.

During that meeting, I told the representatives of Grassy Narrows that our Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was prepared to sit down and talk to community members further once we received an invitation, because what had happened was there had been a breakdown in communication. There had been an offer in June 2011 to meet and continue to talk about these issues, and then nothing had happened in terms of an actual meeting. I think there had been some outreach but for whatever reason it hadn't been taken up and the meeting hadn't taken place. I felt it was important to reconnect those threads and to get the conversation going again.

That brings me back to July 31. I travelled to Grassy Narrows, and at the meeting, Grassy Narrows Chief Fobister was present and there were several community councillors. There were officials from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment and there was also an observer from the Ministry of Health to hear the concerns, not necessarily to be part of problem-solving at that point.

1620

It was a really honest and wide-ranging discussion. We talked about mercury contamination, about economic development; we talked about training and skills development.

The upshot of that is that the interministerial group is going to meet in the near future. I committed to the

community that by the fall, we would work to arrange that meeting so that there could be a full airing of the concerns and all the necessary ministries could be at the table.

I use that as an example. It sounds like it's just another conversation, and I get that. But if there is no conversation about these complex issues, then there will be no solution. As it stands right now, the opinion of the government of Canada vis-à-vis the contamination in the fish is different than the opinion of our scientists, and that's an issue that we have to deal with. But the fact is that the community needs to be heard. We need to figure out what the food supply is going to be or should be. There was a fish-for-food system in place where frozen fish was brought into the community, but the community wasn't interested in eating that fish—and I understand. The taste was different. It didn't taste like the fresh fish out of the river and the lake, and I totally get that. But at the same time, we want to make sure that people are eating safe and uncontaminated food.

That's the situation with Grassy Narrows. I felt very good that we were able to reconnect the conversation and restart that discussion.

The second thing I wanted to talk a little bit about was the Algonquin land claim that has been mentioned a couple of times already. I want to bring folks up to speed. As many of you know, the Algonquin land claim is the largest and most complex land claim under negotiation in Ontario. Canada, Ontario and the Algonquins of Ontario are working together to resolve this comprehensive claim through a negotiated settlement. When it's resolved, it will produce Ontario's first modern-day constitutionally protected treaty. Negotiation combined with public consultation, I believe, remains the best way to address the historical, constitutional and practical issues that arise from aboriginal land claims.

If I can just go back to some of the issues that Mr. Barrett was raising about history and disagreements about land claims, I think that the commitment we have made as a government to move along the process in land claims and to expedite land claims in a responsible way is the best way to move forward. I think that denying that there are conflicts or denying that there's an issue and not taking part is not helpful. So we believe that being at the table and taking part in those conversations is what is critical. That means that there has to be public consultation; there has to be input from all of the groups that I know have an interest in a claim this big.

The negotiators for Ontario, Canada and the Algonquins are working at building this modern-day treaty. It extends over 36,000 square kilometres of land and water. There are 1.2 million people working and living in this huge territory. The key negotiation issues include all land and natural resources matters, including hunting, fishing and gathering rights, governance powers and various compensation questions. We expect that the land claim settlement will include a financial package; parcels of crown land that will be transferred to Algonquin ownership; agreement on Algonquin harvesting rights, such as



hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering; and cultural and economic development elements. All three negotiating parties have agreed that the rights of private property owners will not be affected by these negotiations. What that means is that no private property will be expropriated and private property owners will continue to enjoy unencumbered access to their property. Algonquin Park will remain a public park for the enjoyment of all, and no new First Nation reserves will be created as a result of these negotiations. Those issues have already been agreed upon.

To that end, we have and will continue to invest a lot of time and effort so that we understand and we can fairly address the industrial, commercial, recreational and local government interests attached to crown land and the natural resources of the region as we frame this negotiated settlement.

On the issue of consultation—and I know this has been the stuff of a lot of discussions, whether it's on talk radio or whether it's in the corridors of this place or whether it's in communities—what I want to say is that we have already consulted extensively. There are various advisory groups in place. There have been dozens of meetings with those groups. We're at the point now where there will be more public consultation, and my hope is that we will have an agreement in principle by the end of the year and then there will be further consultation on that agreement in principle. But we're committed to consulting with various groups: the elected local government officials; the sport, recreation and environmental groups; local businesses; aboriginal communities; and others who may not belong to a particular group whose interests may be affected. We believe that in order to fairly address all of those concerns—I talked about the industrial, the recreational and the local government concerns—it has and will continue to take time and effort.

I just want to make sure that I cover all the issue. We've got a lot of positive feedback, actually. I've got a copy of a letter here from one of our municipal partners who appreciates the efforts that we've made. This letter is from Lanark county, and it's addressed actually to MPP Gerry Ouellette and it's on the Algonquin land claim negotiation. It's from Peter Wagland, CAO of Lanark county. He acknowledges receipt of a letter from Mr. Ouellette. He acknowledges it on behalf of Warden John Gemmell. He says:

“As the CAO of Lanark county, I have been regularly attending Algonquin land claim negotiating committee meetings for the past two years”—this letter is dated June 27, 2012—“albeit a member of the Lanark county council has been attending these same meetings for a considerable number of years. Warden John Gemmell was that council rep in 2011.”

He goes on to talk about the process: “In 2010, a second committee was created called the Municipal Focus Group for the Algonquin land claims. The thrust of this committee was to identify local municipal and county issues which needed to be included as part of the

negotiations, i.e. taxation, land use planning, etc. This committee has been extremely effective, and presented a recommended paper to the negotiating committee last year.

“As the negotiations move forward, the negotiating team has been in a position to share information with local municipal councillors at a high level. Today”—that's June 27—“Lanark county hosted a meeting with the local municipalities and members of the negotiating team, at which specific land selection information was shared.”

Then he goes on to say finally, “I can say without a doubt that the Lanark county warden, our council and the local councils are more than satisfied with the process to date, recognizing that negotiations take a long time.”

That's an example, but the fact is, it has been an extensive process. It will continue to be a consultation exercise that's very important to getting to the right answer.

One of the issues that has been raised is the confidentiality around consultation with the municipalities. We're trying, as a government, to be as transparent as possible during this round of municipal consultations, but we have a duty to the other negotiation team, specifically to Canada and the Algonquins of Ontario, that we conduct these consultations in confidence and that people then feel free to speak in a way that allows them to be completely candid. The municipalities, including elected representatives, are being consulted in confidence about crown lands that have been identified for possible transfer as part of that massive Ontario aboriginal land claim that's under negotiation.

It's really important, in order to achieve the draft agreement in principle, that we have those conversations and that everyone have the confidence of the room to have them.

What the land claim will do when it's finalized is provide more certainty regarding the rights of the Algonquins of Ontario related to land and natural resources, and in that way will allow that part of the province to improve its own business climate. There will be more certainty. There will be a better and more transparent relationship between the Algonquin people and their neighbours so they can work together to improve the regional economy and enhance culture.

I'm not saying it's easy, because it's not. It's complex and it's multi-faceted and obviously it has taken a long time. So we will continue to work with all of our partners. The agreement in principle will be available for the public to read, and Ontario's consultations with stakeholders and the public will continue as the negotiations proceed.

1630

I've heard a number of opposition members speak on this issue. One of the comments that I heard was that there wasn't a lot of talk about it at Queen's Park. This was a comment that was made by Mr. Ouellette on a talk radio show, and I have the transcript of that interview. I just want to be clear that we're more than willing to

answer questions and talk about the process to date. I think it has been a very good process. We're very proud of it and we're going to continue to take part. As I have said to people, I'm a person who wants the most access possible for people who want to take advantage of nature. I'm a canoe tripper; I believe that people should find ways to be close to the land. Especially our young people need those outdoor education opportunities. So I want this to be settled in the best way possible. Obviously, our goal is to reach a claim that's clear, that's enduring and that achieves the finality that both Ontario, Canada and the Algonquin people seek. That, I wanted to get on the record.

The final issue I want to speak to a bit more is the Ring of Fire. Can I get a time check? Where are we?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Ten minutes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Ten minutes; okay. I just want to speak about the Ring of Fire. We talked about it a little bit, but obviously it is a very preoccupying issue for the government and for all of the people in the north who see this as a huge opportunity for economic development. You've heard it said, and many of you have said it yourselves, that the Ring of Fire is one of the most promising mineral development opportunities in Ontario in almost a century. Our goal is to maximize the benefits of it for generations to come. That is truly our objective. We recognize the importance of this economic development to First Nations communities, and we want to see meaningful employment and business development for First Nations people in mining, forestry and other natural-resource-based industries. We'll continue to work closely with First Nations communities.

As I said when I was in Thunder Bay a number of weeks ago with Minister Gravelle at the same time that Minister Bartolucci was announcing the location of the ferrochrome processor, what I said then was that we're really at the beginning of the formal engagement and the formal process of conversation with First Nations on these issues, but there have been many months and, in fact, years of conversation leading up to this point.

Over that time, we've been actively working with aboriginal partners on multiple initiatives to support skills training, capacity-building, partnerships and improved economic development opportunities in those resource-related sectors. We're committed to making investments in the First Nations communities closest to the proposed developments because we recognize that without some investments in training and some of the social issues, it won't be possible for the First Nations communities, for aboriginal communities, to take part in the economic development that the Ring of Fire offers.

The planning is under way in a number of areas: first of all, socio-economic development, community governance supports and regional infrastructure supports, which include transmission, local road access and broadband connections, so those are some very specific planning initiatives that are under way; secondly, the long-term monitoring of the environmental impacts to the Ring of Fire region to complement the existing environmental

assessment and land use planning processes; and thirdly, resource revenue-sharing. Resource revenue-sharing is something that is raised on a regular basis by First Nations communities in particular—although I will say that at the AMO conference, resource revenue-sharing was raised by municipalities. What I had to say, wearing my municipal affairs and housing hat, was that the resource revenue-sharing conversation is with the First Nations communities. That's who we're having the conversation with. It's obvious that the economic development will benefit municipalities in that part of the province, but the direct resource revenue-sharing conversations and planning are with the First Nations.

So we're partnering with Canada to identify and commit multi-year capacity resources to First Nations that are most impacted by the Ring of Fire development. As I say, the point of that partnering and those initiatives is to enable the First Nations to plan and identify economic opportunities over the long term.

We're also formalizing our relationship with First Nations communities in the Ring of Fire with regard to these opportunities, and that's through memoranda of co-operation or understanding. So we're working to get on paper what the commitments are and how we intend to move forward in order to be able to see these communities share in the economic and social benefits.

Over the last two years—and this is why I wanted to address this issue—we've heard from First Nations in the Ring of Fire area on environmental issues, on the desire for greater participation in economic opportunities and the need for socio-economic support and regional infrastructure. I know that there have been many informal conversations over the past few years, but the formal consultation starts now. I'm saying this because there has been some talk and some perceived lack of consultation with aboriginal communities, but this formal process is now beginning. Now that the location of the processing facility has been decided, that more formal engagement can happen.

I think I've said that we seek to engage First Nations on a number of issues: environmental monitoring, resource revenue-sharing, training and skills development, and social supports. I'll just use social supports as an example. When I travelled to Webequie, which as you know is one of the First Nations that is very close to the Ring of Fire site, we talked about some of the addiction and health issues that will need to be addressed if people are going to be able to take part in training opportunities and are going to be able to engage. So when I say "social supports," that's the kind of thing I'm talking about. It's training opportunities but, backing up from the training opportunities, it's helping people get ready to take part in those training opportunities. So we're committed to making investments in that area as well.

I read a little bit of that letter from Minister Bartolucci, but I just want everyone to know that that letter was sent to Marten Falls First Nation, Neskantaga, Nibinamik, Webequie, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Long Lake 58 and then also to the Assem-



bly of First Nations and Shawn Atleo and Regional Chief Stan Beardy. He sent that overview of moving forward on the Ring of Fire, to make commitments around environmental protection initiatives, around the regional infrastructure and social supports, and around the resource revenue-sharing. I can provide copies of that letter or more detail if you are interested in that.

Those are the issues that I wanted to come back to address, and just to be clear, we recognize that there's a lot of work yet to do. We recognize that the Ring of Fire is not just about a particular First Nation, nor is it about a particular region of the north. I think that the north will benefit from the Ring of Fire, but so will the broader economy of Ontario. In order for that to happen, there has to be a good process, and that's what we are working to ensure right now.

I think I will stop there. I must be nearly through my time.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You have two more minutes, if you want it. You don't have to take it all. It's up to you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. If I've got another minute, then I will just go back to another trip that I took recently, and that was to Wabigoon Lake. This goes back to the land claims issue and our desire to settle claims and to put those relationships on a good footing. So I was able to travel to Wabigoon Lake. I'm going to read the letter of apology that I delivered as well as the settlement, because there was a \$27-million settlement of an outstanding flooding claim. But I also delivered this apology. It was to Chief Ruben Cantin Sr. of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation.

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"I am pleased that the government of Ontario and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation have successfully negotiated a settlement to your community's outstanding flooding claim. This achievement is due in large part to the commitment and effort of your First Nation and Ontario.

"On behalf of the government of Ontario, I extend our sincere apology to the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation for the flooding of your reserve lands and the harm that the flooding caused to your community when Ontario constructed the dam at Dryden in 1897. For this, we are sorry.

"The settlement of this land claim is a testament to your community's strength and determination to ensure that the mistakes of the past are addressed and never again repeated. We hope that the settlement of this land claim, and this apology, will be seen as a heartfelt gesture of reconciliation on the part of the government of Ontario, and as a public recognition of your community and people.

"Both Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and Ontario acted honourable, reasonably, and in good faith in the negotiations, leading to a settlement that is fair to all. We look forward to building a new relationship that looks to a better future for everyone."

I think that letter and that apology encapsulate what it is we're trying to do as a government to put the rela-

tionship between us and aboriginal people on a much better footing.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And the time has expired.

We are now into that portion for the balance of five and a half hours where each party in turn will have 20 minutes to ask the minister questions, starting with the official opposition. You have 20 minutes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** First of all, Minister, I want to compliment you. Mr. Barrett gave us a history lesson and you're giving us additional lessons. You've got a lot going on, and I want to compliment you and your staff for the preparedness.

Just sitting back and listening, I'm hearing there is a myriad of initiatives that you have to undertake, being the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in addition to your other duties. I think of the socio-economic conditions, I think of the education and the housing, and of course land claims. That's not an easy task. I'm sure it can be frustrating.

What I'd like to do is talk to you a little bit about the looming debt that our government and our province is being faced with right now; it could be in excess of \$411 billion. Of course, let's talk about the current deficit of about \$15.3 billion. I think that you'd agree that our government just needs to find revenue and cut expenses where it has to. Having said that, I kind of want to lead us into an area that I'm hoping you can provide us with some insights into.

The RCMP have said that native reserves are often sites for the sale of illegal tobacco. What has your ministry done to ensure that the families on the reserves are not forced to participate in this illegal activity as a source of income?

We talk about illegal tobacco. I remember in my previous life as a national trainer travelling in parts of Manitoba. I remember being up in Thompson, Manitoba and finding out about a lot of the issues and challenges that the people are faced with out there. It bothered me when I heard you say "teenage suicides." These young people up there would take plastic bags—you know the Ziploc bags?—and put gasoline in them. Then they would sniff the gasoline, and of course too much of that would be suicidal as well.

Going back to illegal tobacco, we're just wondering: What are you doing to ensure that families on the reserves are not forced to participate in illegal activity as a source of income?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm glad you raised the issue of tobacco because it's definitely, if I might say, a burning issue in our ministry and in the relationship with First Nations. It's, again, complex. I don't mean to retreat behind complexity as an evasive tactic, but it is complex. Let me just frame the discussion around tobacco in this way.

First of all, the first layer is that tobacco has sacred meaning in First Nations culture, so there's that sort of overarching reality.

Secondly, there are enforcement issues that are complicated by federal regulation and law juxtaposed to

provincial regulation and law. We've got law enforcement issues.

The third strand, if I might, is the issue around economic sustainability for communities engaged in the production of tobacco and the sale of tobacco, that we call contraband, that we can call unregulated, whatever the language is. You know, we have that issue.

So my conversation with primarily folks at Six Nations and Akwesasne—those are the groups that I've spoken with the most—

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Chippewas.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And the Chippewas, yes—has been about how to approach this very difficult issue from an enforcement perspective and also from an economic sustainability perspective. How do we work together to create an environment where there is legal economic activity where there should be, where it's not illegal economic activity?

Since 2004, we've continued to strengthen enforcement against the illegal manufacture and sale of tobacco products. We've worked to strengthen those regulations, and at the same time, as I say, recognize the traditional use of tobacco in First Nations communities. In the 2012 budget, we talked about plans to increase enforcement measures. We also committed the province to continue dialogue with First Nations communities and organizations on those economic sustainability issues, because I don't think we can have this conversation without doing that.

So our ministry has been in discussion with the Ministry of Finance and with First Nations in order to develop some mutually beneficial solutions to address those unresolved issues. I'll just outline a number of things that we're doing, because I think that was your question.

We are working to engage with First Nations with respect to the Ministry of Finance's plans to introduce regulations under the Tobacco Tax Act which will be effective October 1, 2012, and that will provide additional enforcement and compliance tools.

We're developing and supporting pilot proposals brought forward by First Nations communities for the self-regulation of tobacco, so that addresses the third issue I talked about, which is the sustainability.

We're working with the Akwesasne First Nation on economic development and recovery strategies. What that's aimed at is shifting the local economic opportunities away from tobacco trade through a multi-jurisdictional table. I will tell you that Chief Mike Mitchell of Akwesasne has come forward. He's got a number of economic development proposals that would put his community on a sounder economic foundation, and so we're in conversation with him about that.

We're going to continue to work on all of those fronts, because I don't think there is just one that we need to work on.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You see, one of the things pointed out in the Auditor General's report in 2008 indicated that Ontario loses roughly half a billion dollars in tax revenue due to the sale of illegal tobacco. What has been the First

Nations community's response to this claim? How are they willing to work with you? Are they denying it? Are they fighting you on it? Are they continuing to do it? What's going on?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I might ask my deputy to speak to some of the legal issues, but my experience has been that the communities have been very willing to engage in this conversation, while asserting their right to work in tobacco. I think there's a pretty clear statement on behalf of many of the communities that this is something that they have done. They see that it's a foundation of their economic health. At the same time, they don't necessarily want their kids to grow up and be engaged in what is perceived as an illegal economy. They would much rather have a range of opportunities for their children. So on your first question about how do we or how have we worked to make sure that people are not forced to take part in an illegal economy, it's the chiefs and the community leaders themselves who want their communities to be on a legal and sound footing. I've found that they've been very receptive to, as I say, a number of conversations, whether it's on enforcement or on the economic development. They're part of the same package.

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**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So you're working to improve that overall situation.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** "Perceived illegal activity" I think were your words. It's either legal or it's not.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Except—and I'm going to ask the deputy to speak to this—as I said before, there are federal and provincial jurisdictional issues, so I'm going to ask Laurie LeBlanc to speak to that.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** What I'll reference is the legislation that the government passed—the minister referred to it—in June 2011, Bill 186, the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act. This was a bill that the Ministry of Finance had sponsored; it was passed by the Legislature. There are a few tools that that legislation provides to deal with the issue of tobacco. It includes restructured fine levels for possessing illegal cigarettes, authority for police officers to seize illegal cigarettes discovered in plain view, and a marking system. It also—and I think this is the important piece to today's discussion, as well—allows the Ministry of Revenue, now Finance, to enter into arrangements and agreements with First Nations concerning the administration and enforcement of the Tobacco Tax Act on reserve.

Much of that work will be done through regulation. Ministry of Finance has been very committed over the last number of years working with aboriginal affairs to talk to First Nations about how this might work. Some of those measures—and it's the raw leaf tobacco area that in particular we're looking at in terms of strength and enforcement.

There are regulations that were posted on the regulatory registry and there is a staged approach that the Ministry of Finance is doing in terms of dealing and discussing with First Nations. It's really important that



this is a conversation that Ministry of Finance has had with First Nations communities. We've been assisting with that. It's really to speak to them about knowing that this will have a direct impact on their community and what is the best way to move forward on this.

There is a second stage of outreach and consultation that will happen, engagement that will happen, this fall and will focus on the broader issues related to the proposed enforcement measures outlined in the budget.

The view of the Ministry of Finance in terms of moving this forward is to have the dialogue, to have the conversations about how this might work, with an end objective, obviously, of ensuring that the legislation that was introduced and passed comes into effect in an appropriate way.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, thank you on that, because our concern is that half a billion dollars, which is an estimated number, is huge, and it's a way of helping this government kind of get back to a balanced budget. It's finding ways. Cutting expenses is one, and/or services. But also, looking for ways of additional revenue. Right now, I view it as lost revenue. So my concern is, what has the ministry and/or this government been doing to try to reclaim a lot of that \$500 million, which has been estimated, according to the Auditor General's report—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's what that legislation is about, is increased enforcement.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Bill 186.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Right.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Minister.

It was interesting that the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that in 2007, 14% of illegal tobacco sales stemmed from First Nation reserves. I know we're trying to do a lot for them and to provide for them, but my concern is that—I'm just hoping that the more we're able to do for them, they appreciate it and respect it and can cut back on a lot of the illegal or—I'll use your words—perceived illegal activity. I know you're trying to work with them and trying to bring about—I won't say "law and order" because that may imply vigilantism, but that's not what I'm suggesting here.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I guess I just have to go back to some of the language that I used at the beginning of my remarks. I don't see it as us having to work with them. I see it as—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No, I see it as a collaborative effort. When Joe Miskokomon of the Chippewa came to talk to me about his proposal for a self-regulatory scheme, to talk about how the economy of his community could transform, that's a community within Ontario. That's not a community somewhere else far away that won't have an impact on everyone in the province. That is part of us. So I think this is a collaborative effort. Those children who are growing up on each of the reserves, in each of these communities, are children whom we need in our workforce—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Absolutely.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —our workforce being the Ontario workforce. So not only do we want to make sure

that they have economic viability on their reserves; we want to make sure that the imperatives around a smoke-free Ontario and healthy living are part of their upbringing as well.

It has got to be a collaborative effort, and I think we've got to see our objectives as shared objectives. It's not you and I doing something for someone else; it's us working together with other people who are part of our society to make the society better.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Collectively, for the betterment of all.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Exactly.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Sure, sure. I get that. Thank you.

How much time do I have left, Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You ask the question when the clerk's not here. Let me see. It appears to be five minutes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. Well, I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Barrett.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The illegal tobacco—and I haven't heard anybody before refer to it as "perceived" illegal tobacco; as was pointed out, it's either legal or it's illegal—has pretty well destroyed much of Ontario's legal tobacco economy, including farming. Very recently, there was a lawsuit brought forward by farmers against the Ontario government and the federal government—this lawsuit was dismissed, I guess, a week and a half ago, August 15—with respect to the Ontario government turning a blind eye to contraband tobacco. It seriously has undermined the legal trade, whether it be corner stores, farmers, legal manufacturing, processing, retailing—everything that's been involved with that.

Justice Duncan Grace ruled that even if the government did act to appease First Nations—and I know you use terms like "collaboration" and "having a conversation." I have been in many of these manufacturing operations. I've talked to many people who are in this business, the illegal business. They are beyond having a conversation. Many of them are very young. They've got a brand new, black, four-wheel-drive pickup truck. They're not going to give that up. They are not going to give that up.

We have gone so far down this hole that I think something like between 32% and 40% of the tobacco smoked in Ontario—and it's not just native children; it's children in the north end of Toronto and all across Ontario. These are the ones that go for the illegal trade, because it's so cheap. Why pay 80 or 90 bucks when you can pay \$8 or \$9? So, to date, this has been a failure.

I do know that under the previous NDP government, Bob Rae, in collaboration with Jean Chrétien, virtually eliminated the illegal trade in tobacco. I was working for the Ontario Addiction Research Foundation at that time. I was working on Six Nations. I watched about 300 smoke shacks disappear overnight. They are not going to disappear through having a conversation or talking about a perceived illegal trade.

Focusing on raw leaf—that's a code word for focusing on farmers—that's the low-hanging fruit. Farmers obey

the laws. They're very visible. They don't operate at night. At some point, this Ontario government does have to deal this illegal trade and—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think, Mr. Barrett, that's why the legislation has been brought in. Don't get me wrong: I'm not saying there's no illegal tobacco. I'm not saying there's no illegal trade. Of course there is, and that's why we're bringing in legislation to deal with contraband. If there were none, or we perceived there were none, then we wouldn't bring in legislation to deal with contraband. We have, and that legislation will come into effect. So we're very aware that there's action that needs to be taken and we're working to take that action.

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All I'm saying is that there's another conversation about the economic viability of communities who have been engaged in the processing, the production, and so I think we have to acknowledge that that has to be dealt with.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Oh, it brings billions of dollars into native communities; there's no question about that. Illegal trade brings billions of dollars into the native communities.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So we have to work on two fronts, and that's what I'm saying. We have to work on the front to deal with the illegal trade in the contraband, and at the same time we have to deal with the reality that there are communities that are dependent on an economy. And what I'm saying to you is, the leadership of those communities have talked to me, have said that they're interested in economic diversification, that they want to evolve their economies, that they want their economies to be sustainable and that they want them to be legal economies. Those are the conversations I've had with the leadership in my role as minister.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** There's about 10 seconds, so I think we'll just skip it and we'll go on to Mr. Vanthof—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Oh, we can't have that added to our time?

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, no. We can't even ask a question in 10 seconds.

Mr. Vanthof, you have 20 minutes.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Minister, I'd like to pick up on some of your comments on the Ring of Fire and specifically on consultation with the First Nations. I was at a conference—it was actually in Quebec—regarding First Nations. David Nahwegahbow—I don't know if you're familiar with him, but he's a very prominent First Nations lawyer—was giving remarks on consultation and how the First Nations perceive consultation and how he felt that we receive consultation. To the First Nations, consultation is two or more parties discussing an issue and then taking action on a mutual agreement on that issue. I can't paraphrase this, it was a while ago, but he felt that sometimes when dealing with government, the consultation—and I don't think it's always just the First Nations who feel this way—is dialogue with government

and then the decision is made by government and you are told later what happens.

One of your comments regarding the Ring of Fire kind of rang a bell with me because you had consultations with the First Nation and after a decision was made of where the processing facility was going to be, that's when the formal consultation began, so I would like to know the difference. What is the difference between consultation pre-decision and formal consultation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think the reality was that there was a decision being made by a company about whether it was going to locate a facility in Ontario or not. That conversation was happening, and the location of that facility in Ontario or not was going to have an impact on the Ring of Fire project going forward. I understand that there were concerns that that conversation, which was a business negotiation in some ways, was not as public as some people would have liked it to be. At the same time, once that conversation that was a business conversation had been made, there are implications that flow from that, and so the reality is that people have known for some time that there was going to be a development of the Ring of Fire. So when I say "informal conversations," I mean just that: that there were conversations that weren't part of a structured process that had taken place. They weren't about where the processor was going to be. I give you that; that's not what those conversations were about.

But now that that decision was made as a business decision of Cliffs resources, there needs to be a very in-depth series of engagements on that whole range of issues that we've talked about—the resource revenue-sharing, the infrastructure, the training and social supports. All of that now needs to be put in place.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** If we could just back up a second: As a business person in my former life, I don't disagree with a lot of statements you've made. But just to name First Nations—they view themselves and I think we view them as part owners of the land, perhaps whole owners of the land. So I want to know—you said "conversation," but I want to know the difference between pre-decision-making consultation and formal consultation, because I don't think the First Nations necessarily see a difference, and I think that might be one of our problems with them.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think part of what needs to happen here is, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is going to come and they are going to be able to answer specific questions about some of the things you're asking me about. From my perspective as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, my responsibility is to make sure that, to the greatest extent possible, there is an engagement of First Nations, and that our ministries across government do the work that needs to be done to make sure that that engagement happens.

So I think for the specifics on the business or some of those details, you probably need to talk to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I agree with you, and I don't to beleaguer this point, but Mr. Nahwegahbow's words and



your words clash for me, because where we run into troubles are two societies on the same land—it is at that point. Because I believe, in any dealing I've had with the First Nations, they take all consultation as formal consultation. It's not formal consultation after the decision is made and advice before, and I think that's—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, no, I hear what you're saying. So there needs to be a definition of terms and there needs to be a delineation of the parameters of a discussion. So I think where we get to is, what is it that we're consulting on? The reality is that there will be things that we will together be consulting on and there will be other things where there isn't consultation, both in the First Nations community and in government. So I think that whenever we enter into this area, we have to be clear what it is we're talking about and what it is we're not talking about.

So maybe, and you'll have to speak to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines about this, as we go forward, we need to be more explicit about that: "This is what this consultation is about" and "This is what it's not about." Right?

To be honest, I have had many conversations with leadership from both the First Nations and the broader aboriginal community, and some of it is about that: What is it that we can talk about? What is it that will help us to get to action the most quickly? Again, from my perspective, I think there's a lot of action that's needed. Whether we're talking about education or whether we're talking about land claims or whether we're talking about economic development, I think there's lots of action that needs to happen. And so how do we get from point A, which is the beginning of a discussion, to point B, which is the point at which we can take action? How do we get there the most quickly?

Part of the way we get there the quickest is by defining the parameters of our discussion, and that's not always easy. But I think you're raising a point that makes that point.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Because once again, I don't want to beleaguer this, but go back to the Wahgoshig, and we're not going to—it's in court. The "consultation" word is thrown out a lot, without the parameters, so when you've got a First Nation thinking they're talking about something and they actually aren't talking about it, it would be better off if they knew.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I spoke earlier about guidelines on consultation, and I think that as we—collectively—get better at this, it will be clearer what the parameters of a particular discussion are, what everybody's responsibility is, what everybody's role is. But the fact is that there still are many of us, whether it's players at this table or players in other ministries, or players in the aboriginal community, that maybe haven't—we haven't got a shared understanding at this point, and that's the goal: to have a shared understanding of consultation.

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**Mr. John Vanthof:** Now I'm going to switch gears—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** —and do some more nuts and bolts, because up till now, I think we've focused on the long term, which, hopefully, is brighter than the past has been.

You touched on it with Grassy Narrows. Food safety is paramount for us, paramount for everyone in the province, everyone in the world, and probably equal to clean water. I'd like to know if—and how many—boil-water alerts have been issued over the past year on First Nations.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to have to ask one of my technical people to get that number, if we have it. Do we have a number?

While folks are looking for that—

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** On that one, we'll have to get back to you. We don't have that number available.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Obviously, clean water is critical, and one of the things that has distressed me in my visits to First Nations is—there's the issue of boil-water, but there's also the issue of accessibility of water. In Pikangikum, I noted that people had to go to water points to get their water, because there is clean water—there is a water processing plant—but there isn't any delivery mechanism to people's homes. That kind of lack of infrastructure is extremely distressing. The other thing that happens often is, there are water processing plants that are set up, but the maintenance and repair and upkeep of those is problematic. So, honestly, it is one of the conversations with the federal government.

Our clean water agency is able to provide some support to First Nations, but there have been infrastructure decisions that have been made. In Attawapiskat, as you may be aware, the intake—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Oh, yes, I know.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Right? The intake valve was put in a place where the water is too shallow, where the sediment is too present. There's an engagement right now, a pilot that's going on, with a new filter, because apparently it would cost over \$10 million—I think it was about \$12 million—to move the intake pipe. So there's a pilot that's ongoing right now, putting a new filter in place. But the federal government would only pay for, I think, two months of the pilot, so the First Nation was looking for some relief, and I think we've been able to provide them with some support: the Attawapiskat water pilot.

Anyway, when I met with the community, one of their concerns was that they needed some help in getting this pilot to completion. So I just use that example because it's an example of where, in particularly some of the remote communities, the infrastructure maintenance, the infrastructure upkeep, has not been what it should be. It's not that I want to point fingers, but we really do need the federal government to step up to the plate on those issues.

I want to give you—

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** I do have the numbers of the boil-waters.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We have the boil-water numbers for you.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Just to be clear, this is something that's tracked by Health Canada, because of course, this is, as the minister pointed out, a federal government area of jurisdiction.

According to Health Canada, as of January 27, 2012: 28 communities and 48 community systems with a drinking water advisory.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Which is unacceptable. Absolutely.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I don't know if you have that right here, but we would like to know: Are we progressing or regressing on that? What were last year's numbers, and what communities? We don't need that right now, but if you could forward that to us.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, we can get that. But I think, to be fair, that is a question that should be asked of the federal government as well. I think that it is fair to ask that question.

Yes, Laurie?

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** If I can just supplement that, the federal government—just to be clear, in February 2012, Bill S-8, the Safe Drinking for First Nations Act, was introduced by the federal government in the Senate. This would allow Canada, in collaboration with First Nations, to develop federal regulations for access to safe drinking water, to ensure effective treatment of water and waste water, and the protection of sources of drinking water on reserves. So effectively, communities would adopt provincial water standards on reserve. What that doesn't address is how this is going to be funded, so I think that gets to the minister's point.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I know it's not my job to give you credit, but I know you've gone the extra mile to help at Attawapiskat. I'm not just out here to throw stones.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm not abdicating responsibility, and I think our clean water agency is ready and willing—and I said that in Attawapiskat—to give support, to do what we can. But at the same time, we need that federal partner at the table.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On the water issue, I think water is something that Ontarians don't take for granted but we are all, because of things that have happened in the past, very focused on it. As a farmer, we are forced to, and diligently do so, protect water sources. I think we all believe that all Ontarians, be they us or First Nations—and I hate "us or First Nations" because we're all us. But the fact is, for me, when I go to Wahgoshig—that doesn't really hit you until you go to some place like Attawapiskat.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Right.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The one thing about Attawapiskat: It focused everybody's attention on Attawapiskat or Pikangikum. But there's a lot more of them that didn't have the media spotlight.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Absolutely.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** And they are equally bad. In Attawapiskat, there are great things too.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Oh, absolutely.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** But the fact that Attawapiskat is in Ontario wasn't, for me, a heartwarming experience.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No. It was interesting. It was an elder, when I was meeting with the chief and the council in Attawapiskat, who stood up and said that the water intake had been placed in the wrong place. So it was years and years ago that they knew that there was going to be a problem down the road, so to speak.

If we go back to the Ring of Fire and connect these dots, one of the things that was very compelling to me in that meeting with the council was talking with the Attawapiskat community about the potential impact of the Ring of Fire on their water supply because, being downriver from the potential development site, it's another indicator of why it's so important that we do the environmental monitoring that needs to happen.

Anyone who flies over northern Ontario—you couldn't believe that there would ever be a water problem, there's so much water and it looks so pristine. But when you get down on the ground, there have been those decisions that have been made that have not been right. We need to make sure we get it right this time.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** One other comment, and hopefully you get—and I know it's not on anybody's list, but it really hit me on Attawapiskat. First Nations have a lot of health problems—diabetes—and the only thing that was the same price at the Northern store in Attawapiskat was pop and chips.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Everything else was unbelievable; the price was unbelievable. I know it's not your responsibility to fix the price of pop and chips, but why? Why is everything else four or five times as much, and four and five times as much as where I live, and where I live it's bit more expensive, some of it, than here?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's the price of gas.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes, the price of gas. I won't tell you what the price of gas is in Attawapiskat. But what can we do? Because until we do something—and we'll get into the Ontario Works problems in the next round. Some of these people have no choice. You can't eat on Ontario Works in Attawapiskat. It's incredible.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think the broad issue that you're touching on—you're raising the issue of food security, of food availability, fresh food availability, diet. Obviously, the rampant diabetes within the First Nations community is a huge health concern, but the broader is the deep poverty that many First Nations—I'm going to say particularly First Nations people on reserve—find themselves living in, and I think that is an overarching concern.

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It relates back to, I believe, those other issues we've talked about. So it goes back to education. It goes back to economic development, because if there is a sustainable economy, then poverty is alleviated, and making sure that people who live in the communities can take part in the economic activity that is available. So the worst thing that could happen would be, for example, the Ring of



Fire to be developed and people in the closest communities not having access to the jobs or not being able to take part.

I don't have the answer for you on the food, except to say that the transportation costs and all of those costs contribute to the escalated price of food. But what I do know is that if we don't make sure that kids graduate from school, that they get the education they need so they can get the jobs they need, and that those jobs are available, then we're not going to solve that problem and we're not going to solve the health problems, because those will continue.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** One more on Attawapiskat. We talk about—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Sorry. You've only got five seconds, so I'm going to cut you off.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I will combine it with the Tories; they have 15.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We will now go to the government. You have 20 minutes.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Oh, it's our time? Well, I'll start off and then I know some of my colleagues have some questions.

Minister, let me just start with a sort of very general opening question. It's an observation that I think many of us share who have been following the First Nations issues and the process of resolving them or talking about them or getting them behind us.

It's probably a fair comment, I think, that there is a sense out there in the broader community that a lot, if not most, of the issues seem to have a much longer shelf life, if you will, in terms of the process of working them through, and in many cases it's a long and tortuous road with many dips and dives and false starts and restarts and so on. There is a sense that I've heard in the aboriginal community that there may be this idea, rightly or wrongly, that in some ways—and I don't mean to make this point too strongly, but the idea of staying in the negotiation process itself is just as attractive as the idea of actually getting it resolved and getting it behind us. I've heard those comments made and I've heard many explanations about why people may think that the idea is to stay in process rather than get it behind us.

Now that you've been there a year or so, do you have any thoughts on that? I've heard that from leaders in the aboriginal community. So how do we get out of the process, and how do we motivate ourselves to want to get the issue behind us and tackle the next one?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The reality of that perception or fact makes me very impatient. It's one of the things when I was first appointed that I really wanted to—I wanted to try to move ahead on some things more quickly. Now, that's probably a trap that a lot of Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs fall into in the initial days: "I'm going to do it differently. We're going to move faster now that I'm here." The reality is that these are multi-faceted issues. They take a long time.

But to go back to my comment earlier to Mr. Vanthof, I think part of the problem is that sometimes we don't define the parameters of the discussion clearly enough and we don't set out our objectives and we don't agree on what we're not going to talk about.

Is it easier to have a large conversation about jurisdiction or is it more productive to have a conversation about education in a particular community and the jurisdiction over that, and get to some resolution on those issues? That's a question, and it's a question that I have put to various First Nations leaders. My preference has been to challenge our First Nations and aboriginal partners to say, "Okay, what are the parameters of this discussion and how are we going to," as I say, "get from point A to point B, point B being the point at which we can take some action?"

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I had some conversations with some aboriginal leaders—who will go unnamed—a year or two ago, and they made exactly the point that you've made. They said, "In many cases, we sit down with governments of various levels—federal, provincial, municipal—and we, right off the bat, tackle big, big issues; we want to solve the really big problems." Some of the aboriginal leaders said that they felt it was far better off, as you said—I'm not saying this just because I'm your parliamentary assistant, but they made the point that it would be far better off to tackle a discrete issue that you can tackle meaningfully, in a fixed time frame, a shorter time frame, and get a result and move to the next one. They saw that as a confidence-building exercise, if they got one behind them and then another behind them, and several and several, and then the issues they tackle get larger and larger and larger, and then they moved to the global issues.

I suppose the flip side of that coin is—one of the other aboriginal leaders added the comment, "You've got to tackle the global issues before you tackle these issues," and there was a debate with these aboriginal leaders around a meal in the evening whether to go big or to go small off the bat. What's your view on that?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** My initial comment to that is that that is a debate that I know goes on in the aboriginal community. It's something that in some cases, I think, has hobbled the ability to take part in a discussion that might end in resolution because there's been an internal discussion, and that's the business of the aboriginal community to sort out; that's their purview. But I think our job as government is to work to identify some of the issues that have been presented to us as burning issues. I think education is at the top of that list, because that's not an issue that one party has brought forward, whether political party or not; it's not an issue that one government has brought forward. That's an issue that First Nations governments, aboriginal, Métis Nation—all parties—have said: "This is a concern."

I'll tell you, the conversations with young people—and I know you've spoken to young aboriginal people. In some ways, they are more impatient to get to the specifics, because they feel an urgency to resolve some of

these issues in the shorter term. They are very respectful of their elders, and I think that's an honourable and honoured part of their tradition. But at the same time, what some of them have said to me is, "We want the same opportunities that other young people in the province have. So we're going to push for those. We have a right to those. At the same time, we have a deep respect for our traditional rights and our elders, but we do want resolution of these—we want a school; we want teachers who are trained; we want employment opportunities." That's what they want.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** So here's one of these discrete issues that I've heard from some of the aboriginal community members, particularly the youth and those interested in education. They pointed out to me that aboriginal education is a federal responsibility. Education in other aspects is a provincial responsibility—and they've done the numbers. They've shown that, on average, when you look at the money that the various provinces put into education, and you compare that to the money that the federal government puts into aboriginal education, there's about \$2,000 to \$3,000 per student less than the federal government puts in. Surely, if there's a community where they could use the extra \$2,000 or \$3,000—and it's not really extra; the \$2,000 or \$3,000 just brings them up to what the provinces are doing for the non-aboriginals. That's a very discrete, narrow little piece of the problem. How could we go about tackling that, to get the federal government not to give extra money, but just to pay the same money that the provinces are paying per student?

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, that's the \$200-million question, because it is absolutely at that nexus that the problem of the adequacy of the physical and educational resources is found to be wanting. I think the responsibility of our government—and we've made it a priority—is to engage First Nations, to engage the on-reserve communities in talking about what the changes might be, how we might move to a different model. We need the federal government at the table, and I use the example of the conversation with the Union of Ontario Indians. We're engaged in those bilateral conversations.

I think that the federal government has, in talking about \$275 million that they have put in their budget, which they did—they put in \$275 million to spend over the next three years on First Nations education. Now, I think that's important. It's an important gesture. It's an important signal that they see that First Nations education is something that has to be tackled and that there has to be money attached to it. I said a \$200-million question because the \$275 million that the federal government put in place is for the whole country. We believe, and my officials I know will leap up and correct me if I'm wrong, that just to deal with the gap in Ontario is a \$200-million proposition. That would be capital and operations, I believe. We need to quantify the issue, we need to quantify the problems, we need to identify what the supports are, and that's part of what we're engaged in right now.

We've hired a person in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs who's doing some work, I think I mentioned before, leading a bit of a listening exercise with some of the First Nations communities and educators to try to identify what the resources are that would be the most helpful, particularly in those transitions between the on-reserve schools and the secondary schools in the provincial schools, trying to figure out what exactly what those interventions should be, because I don't think we necessarily have identified what would work and what wouldn't work. What is it that needs to happen? Is it about the physical building? Is it about the curricular materials? Is it about the training of the teachers? Is it about the language training? Because there are many programs where students have been able to learn their heritage language—or the language of the home, in many cases—and that has helped them to reconnect with education. What is the combination of factors that will help to advance these kids? And then, what will all of that cost? I think that it's probably a combination of all of those things.

One of the issues that has been raised by some of the First Nations communities with me is the issue of special-needs assessment. This actually came up when I was in Attawapiskat and some of the other communities: the cost to even get students identified, to have them travel from the community to where there could be a special-needs assessment, or, in the case of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, having to leave the community to get any service at all. All of those costs have not been quantified. We need to do that, and then we need, I believe, a region-by-region or community-by-community conversation with the federal government and the First Nations community about how to get those resources in place.

To be fair to the federal government, I think it's difficult for us or the First Nations to go to the federal government and just say, "You have to fix this problem," without being able to articulate exactly what the issues are. Yes, there's a \$2,000 to \$3,000 or more gap between funding, but what is it that we need that funding to cover, what is it that's happening and what is it that's not happening? That's the work we're engaged in now.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** That leads to the question, then—you described your role in your opening comments, "I believe the primary role of our ministry is to act as a facilitator" on a whole host of issues. Recognizing that there's a \$2,000 to \$3,000 gap and recognizing the difficulty you said of assessing where to spend the \$2,000 or \$3,000—on the assumption that the federal government has to commit to moving quickly—what can we do to light a fire under the feds? Because I wake up in the morning and read the papers, and on one hand, I read that there's a fighter aircraft, the F-35—billions and billions of dollars overrun. Then I do the math on this \$2,000 or \$3,000, and we seem to be mired here. And these are human lives and, relatively speaking, it's a small amount.

As the facilitator, how do we light a fire—a constructive fire?



**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, I think there are a couple of things we can do. I'll just reference my last comments and then move on to the second one. I think we need to articulate clearly what it is in our jurisdiction, in Ontario. Break it down and talk about exactly what it is that's needed, what's the price tag and what's the list of things that need to change. Again, maybe we do that community by community. So with the Union of Ontario Indians, we're at the point where I think there has been a lot of identification of the changes that need to happen, there's a price tag now being attached to those changes and that's the conversation that's happening with the federal government. In the meantime, we are working with the Union of Ontario Indians to identify the resources we can put in place. I think that identification and quantification is very important.

But I think the other thing we can do is be part of the national dialogue. Because the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group has ministers from across the country, and whether it's on violence against women or whether it's on this education issue, I think it's our responsibility as a country, as provincial leaders and aboriginal leaders, to be very explicit and clear with the federal government about what we see is their responsibility to do, and to speak out on that. I think Ontario's job is to be part of that. We've taken a leadership role. Minister Duguid and Minister Bentley played a leadership role in bringing that group together and being a spokesperson for it. I think we can't underestimate the value of people from across the country speaking with one voice. The fact that the national chiefs and the leaders of the other aboriginal organizations are at the table makes it very powerful.

I raised the issue of violence against women, because I think that's another area where there has been a lot of conversation—there's been identification of what the issues are—but there hasn't necessarily been a tracking of success or lack of success. The more we can articulate how we see the definition of success, what the definition of success is—Gertrude Stein: When we get there, there's no "there." I would prefer that there's a "there," and we know what that is and what we're looking for in terms of a definition.

I think the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group is engaged in that activity: How do we define whether we're moving in the right direction, whether we're moving at all or whether we're falling back? And on education, what are the models from across the country that are working? Because there are some places where aboriginal kids are doing better. Let's look at those and make sure we share those models.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** May I ask—I'd be interested—what those jurisdictions are where things seem to be working better than perhaps they are here? What are some of the role models?

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, within Ontario, there are some communities where kids are achieving much higher standards, but there also are in British Columbia, for example. I think that there are some

models in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. If you look at the curriculum development and the engagement with First Nations on education, I think they are ahead of us in terms of those across-curricular activities. So I think there are some lessons that we can learn from those jurisdictions.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** And to come back to Mr. Vanthof's point, he made a distinction between—I think he was saying—the Far North and perhaps what I'll refer to as the near north, where perhaps these issues are more manageable and the results are easier to obtain. Is there any sense to having what I would call the Far, Far North strategy on some of these issues—the Attawapiskats of Ontario—as opposed to the near north on some of these issues?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Sorry. I was just distracted for a second. Is there any point in focusing on—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** On having different strategies, or focusing on a different strategy, for the Far North as opposed to the near north, or a different emphasis on these educational issues.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. That's an interesting question. It's so idiosyncratic, because there are communities that have both an elementary school and a high school on the reserve. There are communities where the kids leave the reserve to go to high school. There are communities where the kids leave the reserve to go to elementary school and high school. So there's a whole mix of issues.

We need some baseline data. We need to know where kids are and how they're doing, community by community, and we don't necessarily have that baseline data.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You'll have to go back to that in your next round.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. We now have approximately 12 or 14 minutes. Although you will get your 20, you'll have to complete it the next time. As soon as the bell goes, the two bells, that it's over, then we're going to stop here. Go ahead.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'll turn it over to Mr. Barrett.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Barrett.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Chair.

The Algonquin land claim has been discussed a little bit so far. I know there's an agreement in principle in the works. As you had indicated, the goal is to create a brand new treaty.

We receive information about concerns about the secrecy. There just seems to be very little concept of citizen participation in this process. I think you mentioned there's something like 1.4 million people in this gigantic swath of eastern Ontario. There's something like 13 ridings. I don't know whether the 13 MPPs and MPs are being informed about these deliberations.

I know there was a newspaper article that was probably in the North Bay Nugget. The mayor of East Ferris—his last name is Vrebosch—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Bill Vrebosch, yes.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** —walked out of the meetings in protest because they were secret.

These negotiations have been going on for something like 20 years. I guess the mayor only recently learned that a fellow named Wayne Belter, Mattawa's town clerk, is one of the advisory committee members. I think we all know what it's like to be on an advisory committee. You don't get to make any decisions.

We went through this with the Six Nations negotiations. Our former mayor of Haldimand, Marie Trainer, was at one of the tables. It was known as the kiddie table. She was not at the main table. It was frustrating for her and frustrating for other people to find out what was going on.

As with the goal with Algonquin, crown land, public land, will be transferred. I assume the mayor was maybe concerned about that. We've seen Ipperwash Provincial Park transferred at the stroke of a pen. I don't think there was any public consultation or meetings with the general public or neighbouring cottages about that.

I do know that down in Brant county, because of the Caledonia business, public land, the former Burch correctional facility, was handed over. I know the community held meetings to express their concern about that. But again, there was no public participation, no consultation.

The questions are: Why are these things kept confidential? Why are they kept secret? You've alluded to that. Why shouldn't the public know? I mean, we're talking about public land. Why are voters not being made aware of what is going on? And the perception is: What is the government trying to hide? What is it afraid of?

I know locally, down our way, the concern is that this government would hand over the subdivision that's presently being occupied to somebody else. So there is that concern.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Can I speak to the Algonquin—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes. And I will say, I'm hearing this from cottage organizations, fishing organizations; OFAH, for example.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There are some confidentiality rules that have been established as part of the negotiations, so we have to respect those—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Those are the Ontario government rules, or federal government rules?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** They've been established as—they're tripartite, three-party confidentiality rules. All the parties to the negotiation have agreed to those rules. If you've been involved in complex negotiations, which I'm sure you have, whether it's commercial or labour relations or investment opportunities or dispute resolution, I think you'll understand that at some point in that process there does need to be a confidential component.

Having said that, we're in an early stage of the process in the sense that the agreement in principle is not finalized yet. These preliminary meetings that have taken place are technical, and there will be a public consultation, as we have said.

I also have to say, Mr. Barrett, that I hear the denigration of the committees, but these are committees that have very interested and interesting groups, and groups with a lot of status on them. The committee of external advisers—there are 31 groups that are sitting on that committee, from the Algonquin Eco Watch to Algonquin Park youth camps—I'm just picking some here—Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Conservationists of Frontenac Addington, the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, the forest industry of Renfrew county, the Land O' Lakes Tourist Association—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** So this committee of external advisers, are they sitting at the table? Have they been consulted yet or are they going to receive a done deal? You indicated that—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No. Their role has already been to provide advice. That's already been their role. And then the other group is the municipal advisory committee—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Strictly advisory?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Advice becomes grist for the mill, right? These are the people who have been part of this initial process, and then the agreement in principle, which is not finalized—it's a draft—will go out for public consultation. The municipal advisory committee has another 31—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Well, that—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** If I can just say—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** So it's not finalized. When it is finalized, is that when you start the consultation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No. It's a draft agreement in principle that will go out for consultation and there will be commentary on it.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Before it's finalized?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Before it's finalized, yes.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** That's one thing that people are concerned about, because—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And I've said that; I've said that publicly a number of times. I think that we've been clear: A draft is a draft. It will be a draft agreement in principle and that—now, there will obviously be input from groups that have already had input and there will be discussion about those final refinements.

I just wanted to comment that the municipal advisory committee has another 31 groups—the city of Ottawa, Nipissing district; there's a whole range of municipalities that are part of that advisory group. Okay?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Again, have there been public open houses? I have great admiration for how MNR does things with the open houses. The maps are laid out, public consultation, feedback mechanisms—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to ask David Didluck to address the committee and just answer some of your technical questions about the process.

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**Mr. David Didluck:** Sure. Thank you, Minister. Sixty-five meetings with the advisory committee and various representative groups that the minister had pointed out in



the last 20 years have been part of that consultation record—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Sixty-five meetings over 20 years?

**Mr. David Didluck:** Over the last 25 years, and as the minister noted, a number of meetings continue with local governments, 31 more recently in the last four months. Those are our primary constituents and stakeholders who are mostly impacted by the claim area. In addition to that, once the agreement in principle is reached—as the minister noted, this is an agreement in principle; it's not a legally binding document—there is further opportunity by all impacted parties, including the general—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** But that is once the agreement in principle is reached, then there will be consultations?

**Mr. David Didluck:** Once the elements of the agreement in principle have been announced by the parties—and as the minister noted, the Ontario government, Canada and the Algonquin are all working to continue negotiations toward that effect—there will still be plenty of time for public consultation and open dialogue.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** After that AIP is signed.

**Mr. David Didluck:** After the AIP is signed.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Is it going to be hard to open that up again? It's got signatures on it from the people who are at these present meetings.

**Mr. David Didluck:** It has to be ratified by all the parties, sir, and as I said, it's not a legally binding document; it's only a document of high-level principle. Again, all the technical details for harvesting, for resource use, for land use management—all of that still has to be negotiated in detail, and we look to our advisory committees to help us.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But, for example, my understanding is that one of the pieces that's already in place and that I've spoken to is that Algonquin park is not part of this discussion.

**Mr. David Didluck:** Correct.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's not something that would come back on the table as a result of the public consultation. I think, Mr. Barrett, you would agree that that was probably a good thing, that there would be some non-negotiables and that there would be agreement that Algonquin park will not be part of this settlement.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** When would have been the last meeting with the CEA? That's the—I'm not sure which group. That's the advisory—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's the committee of external advisers.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes. When was the last meeting with them?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** David?

We'll have to get that date for you.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Okay, because that seems to be the crux of it. I understand they'd like to have a meeting. They'd like to meet with you, even in an informal chat. I know there have been a few; they refer to them as coffee-and-donut get-togethers. But citizen participation is so important. A million-plus people are involved here; public land, some of which will be handed over; changes

with respect to access to hunting and fishing or how one may get to use one's cottage. To my mind, and certainly from the Caledonia experience, the complete secrecy just serves no purpose at all.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I just need to clarify: Private property is not part of this discussion.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** No, of course not. No, we understand that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But you said "cottages." I just think it's really important that we're careful about our language, because private property is not part of the discussion, so when you say that people are worried about how they're going to be able to use their cottages, that's not an issue.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Do you not have cottage owners on this advisory committee?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, we do.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** That's very important. That's my understanding.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, exactly. That's exactly why we have people like cottage owners there, and the hunters and fishers, because their activities are very important. But private property is not part of the settlement. I just think leaving the impression that somehow someone's cottage can be taken away from them is not a helpful impression.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** No, I didn't even come close to that. I've been involved in this for six and a half years. Private property is not on the table.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Right.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** What you hand over, invariably, seems to be public land.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The point I was making—you raised the issue of cottages, and all I'm saying is that private property is not part of the discussion. That's all I wanted to be clear about.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** That's right.

I know there are a lot of representatives here. Nobody can remember the last meeting with the CEA. The people on that group—I think cottage owners are represented there—would like to have a meeting. It's that simple. They would like to have a meeting, not just coffee but a couple of hours. That's a request, and I hear that from the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association. They are part of that CEA. Of course, OFAH, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters—many are native as well. They would like to go see what's going on. They're very concerned that this agreement in principle will be signed and then there's consultation after the fact, and it's pretty hard to put that bunny rabbit back in the box when all this stuff has been worked out in the secret meetings. It's that simple. That's the kind of request that we're hearing.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, it's simple, but it's wrong, because the reality is that the reason for having the public consultation, once the agreement in principle is in place, is that it is to be fleshed out, that the details are not there, that there is more information that needs to be finalized. That's the point of having the public consultation.

As far as the CEA wanting to have a meeting, first of all, we'll get the date of the last meeting, but it is absolutely the intention for there to be future meetings. I'm going to ask that we get the work plan and figure out what that is, if any of those have been finalized. But it certainly was never the intention that there would be no more meetings.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Well, that's fine. We do operate in a parliamentary democracy, and it is so important. Many of us in this room are elected representatives. There is this concept of citizen participation, community involvement. Sure, you can get some short-term gains. I know it's taken 25 years. There is concern that the provincial side might be pushing this forward more rapidly than, say, the federal side. I think the sincere request is that people are consulted. Certainly with Six Nations, the process of consultation is very, very important, but that also goes for the other people that are being represented or should be represented in this process, 1.4 million people. We cannot sacrifice short-term gain or to meet a deadline without adequate and fulsome consultation before some signatures are put on a document—I don't mean the treaty—that may come back to haunt us down the road.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I just reiterate my comment that the whole point of having an agreement in principle and bringing it to public consultation is to get that input, in addition to the input that we've already gotten from the advisory groups, because we made a commitment to move ahead on land claims and to expedite and to get them finalized.

I think most people would argue that 25 years is a fairly good, long time to be at a project, and we're not finished; it's not done. But I think if we could get to the

point where an agreement in principle could then go to the public and people would have some confidence that they understood what was in it, that will help a lot.

I believe, and I said this on the talk radio show, because there obviously are groups that are following this very closely—I said I think part of the anxiety is just that people haven't seen the agreement in principle yet, so they don't know what's in it. I think that once they see it, then the discussion will be much less angst-ridden, because people will know and they can have a discussion about specifics. I look forward to that.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop everybody there.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Just quickly—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** —we'll shed some light on this. They're asking to see this before it's signed. It's that simple.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You know what? I'm going to bring back to you the dates of the meetings and any other details of the work plan that I can.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I had forgotten that there are some late shows tonight, so they're not going to ring the bell right away. But it is after 6 of the clock. How much time is left for—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** There are four minutes left for you when you return tomorrow afternoon, for the Conservatives.

We are adjourned until tomorrow at approximately 3:45—whenever routine proceedings finishes.

*The committee adjourned at 1801.*



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# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

Wednesday 29 August 2012

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

Mercredi 29 août 2012

## **Standing Committee on Estimates**

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

## **Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Ministère des Affaires autochtones



Chair: Michael Prue  
Clerk: Valerie Quioc Lim

Président : Michael Prue  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 29 August 2012

Mercredi 29 août 2012

*The committee met at 1548 in room 151.*

## MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** We'll call the meeting to order. We're here to resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, vote 2001. There's a total of four hours and 14 minutes remaining, which means we'll have about two hours left when we finish today.

When the committee adjourned yesterday, the official opposition had four minutes left of its 20-minute rotation. I will turn it back to the official opposition, to Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Minister, yesterday we were talking about illegal tobacco sales and things of that nature. I want to shift just a little bit and ask you a little more specifically about an area that is near and dear to my heart down in my riding: the Caldwell First Nations. Back about six years ago—and I could be wrong on the date—they in fact were looking to purchase property down in my area, going to various farms to see if they could buy the farmland and so on.

That was unsuccessful, but, as a result, the ministry has in fact given out—I can't be quoted on the number—100 and some odd million dollars to the Caldwell First Nation. They have now been located down in my riding, still, but in Leamington. There are about 196 people affected by that move.

What was the justification and the reason behind granting Caldwell First Nations that amount of money and for locating them down in the Leamington area?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to have to ask staff to speak to the specifics. I think yesterday I spoke generally to our position as a government that we want to work with First Nations to find ways to resolve these issues that have been outstanding. I'm going to just ask Laurie LeBlanc to speak to the specifics of the Caldwell situation.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** What I'm going to have to do is get back to the committee on the specifics. I understand there's a relationship with the federal government and Canada in this, but I don't want to give uninformed—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Erroneous information?

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** That's right. I want to make sure that I give you accurate information. So we will take your question and we'll get back to you.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I appreciate that very much. It is an area that is of concern, and I appreciate the fact that yesterday, Minister, you did mention that some of these involve more federal versus provincial.

What was the name—and forgive me, because I've forgotten; I don't have my notes with me on this. Actually, maybe I do. I guess you've written a letter to one of the First Nations up north whereby—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The apology to Wabigoon Lake?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Say that one again?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The one that I read?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Wabigoon Lake.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That's the one. Okay.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes. So that dam was built a little over 100 years ago?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In the 1890s.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** And the problem with that dam was that it caused some flooding. Is it still causing flooding—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Flooding, and the community actually had to relocate.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. I know that you had read your letter apologizing on behalf of the government. At that time, was that when the \$27 million was also given to the Wabigoon—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That was part of the settlement, \$27 million, and there was an amount that went to, as I understand it, each member of the community. The apology actually wasn't written, as I understand it, into the settlement, but it was something that was agreed upon.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So \$27 million went to—I'm sorry, to the members of that community?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There was an amount—the settlement agreement provided \$27 million to the First Nation and it was the result of the damaging of reserve lands and to obtain a flooding easement. I'm just looking here to see the details. My understanding at the time, when I was travelling to Wabigoon Lake, was that there had been an amount to each member of the community and then, in addition to that, there was an amount that went to the community for investment and for economic development.



**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I have to stop you because the four minutes is now up. On to the NDP.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That was a quick four.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Think about those thoughts; we'll come around in another 40 minutes.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Chair.

I think the last time it was my turn to go around, I had the name Attawapiskat on my lips and I think I'm going to start there.

We were discussing earlier about the Ring of Fire and how we want to do things differently in the Ring of Fire, or at least improve our relationship with the First Nations and how they benefit from mineral wealth that's on their land, or on all our land.

With Attawapiskat and the De Beers diamond project, I'd like to use that, not as an example, but I know when I was in Attawapiskat, there didn't seem to be the benefit to the community that the community seemed to expect. I can't really quantify that. But that wasn't a project that was developed 100 years ago. I remember in Timmins airport: so many minutes or so many hours until the first—right?

Have we changed anything? Because if we haven't learned anything from—unless that one's working perfectly; I don't think it is. But what have we learned? What are we planning to change, or what are you planning to change?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's actually a great question because I think it gets at the root of some of the challenges that we have going forward. I believe what you're referring to is the impact benefit agreement that was signed with the community and the mining company. When I was in Attawapiskat, there was the same sentiment expressed: that the community didn't feel that they had benefited in the way that they expected.

The details of the impact benefit agreement and the way those have been negotiated, and the details of the Mining Act—again, you're going to have to speak with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. But what I can say to you is that as we approach the Ring of Fire, we're very aware that there's an intertwining of issues that have to be dealt with. Part of it is about the financial benefit, and that's a conversation that will happen in part between the First Nations and companies as the projects roll out. But part of it is about resource revenue-sharing, which I think we spoke about a little bit yesterday. That's certainly a conversation that we want to have with the First Nations, because that certainly is something that Chief Theresa Spence raised at the time when I was in Attawapiskat. She really felt that resource revenue-sharing was an important part of what needed to be considered going forward.

I think I read the letter yesterday from Minister Bartolucci. He has committed to resource revenue-sharing as one of the large issues that needs to be discussed and resolved as we enter into memoranda of co-operation or memoranda of understanding with First Nations as part of the Ring of Fire.

The other reason that it's an interesting question is that there are, I think, around 100 jobs or 90 or so jobs that members of the Attawapiskat community still have in the mine. I guess it might have been a larger number earlier, but that seems to be the number now. One of the councillors, when I was there, stood up and said that he didn't feel that even though there were jobs, things had changed or gotten better.

As we talked about yesterday, the housing issue, the social issues, the education issues, the water—all of those issues contribute to community members' sense of well-being. All of those problems have to be dealt with, and they're not all going to be dealt with just through an impact benefit agreement or just through resource revenue-sharing. So I think our approach, if we've learned, and I think we have—our approach to the Ring of Fire demonstrates that. We understand there's a range of issues; we understand there needs to be much more of a holistic approach, if you will, to working with the community to prepare it for this economic development.

That's not, in and of itself, all that needs to happen. The education issues that we discussed at length yesterday are ongoing. Those are going to have to be dealt with, but as we enter the Ring of Fire we need to be much more cognizant of some of the surrounding issues, not just the quantum of the financial relationship.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** While I was there, one of the biggest complaints I heard—and again, we have examples of where it works really well: First Nations training programs. When a development is ready to roll—and Matachewan in my riding is a very good example. They've got a program, so when it's ready to roll, the First Nations are trained and they get the jobs. That's one of the complaints about Attawapiskat: that by the time the training programs are going, a lot of the jobs have been filled.

For Ring of Fire as well, what would be an estimation—this is going to be a hard question, probably, to quantify for me. But we can't wait to train people when the project starts.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Right.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** So we have to have a target date. How many years ahead do we have to—because that's one of the problems. One thing I want to comment on—it was a myth I had. When we landed in Attawapiskat—you see such abject poverty on TV, so I was expecting to see total disarray. It was right after a snowstorm, a big one. The streets were being cleaned—I'm a mechanical guy—and there were First Nations people who had every bit the skill of anyone else running loaders. It's not that they don't have the skill. That snowstorm was being cleaned up as good as Woodstock.

1600

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And, interestingly, Gregory Kootstachin, who is a business owner in Attawapiskat, recently received an award from the aboriginal business association in the province for his business. He operates heavy equipment. I don't know how many people he employs in Attawapiskat, but he's very much a

thriving business owner. So I think your point is well taken.

I can't quantify the amount of money we're going to spend working with First Nations on training programs specifically for the Ring of Fire, but what I can tell you is that we are working right now to get those training programs set up.

I wanted to just talk a little bit generally about some of the things we're doing too, because all of this work is part of that working with First Nations to increase the capacity.

So we've supported a number of initiatives; for example, \$45 million over three years for the northern training partnership fund, which is a project-based skills training program. It was announced in 2010, and, to be fair, it was put in place to help aboriginal and non-aboriginal northerners, northern Ontarians, to benefit from economic opportunities exactly like the Ring of Fire. That was one of the reasons we put it in place.

There has been \$26.5 million in funding since 2003 for the aboriginal community capital grants program, over 101 major and minor capital grants, and feasibility studies for building and renovating community and business centres, and then \$30 million over 10 years for the Métis Voyageur development fund. That's to support Métis economic development and to provide grants and loans to entrepreneurs and businesses that are new or are expanding, and to promote skill development and create jobs. There's also the new relationship fund, \$51.3 million in funding since 2008, and what that has done is provide aboriginal communities with economic development opportunities and also allowed for some capacity building, to allow them to take part in economic development processes.

Other ones that are in place: There's the First Nations gaming revenue sharing agreement. As you know, there's a funding component for First Nations economic development in that. Under that agreement, 132 First Nations receive 1.7% of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation's aggregate gross revenues, and that's approximately \$3 billion over 25 years. So that's a lot of money going into those communities, and 132 First Nations are pretty much all of the First Nations. I think there are—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay, I've heard three numbers: 132, 133 and 134. Anyway, there are 132 that receive money from the gaming revenue sharing agreement, so that's almost all of the First Nations. And then there's \$5.4 million directly to 37 aboriginal communities for renewable energy initiatives, because, of course, renewable energy is of great interest to the First Nations and Métis communities. So there's a lot that's going on. We just made an announcement recently that we're expanding the aboriginal loan guarantee program from, I think it was, \$250 million to \$400 million. That would allow First Nation and Métis participation in our green energy economy.

So all of that is in place already, and it has all been put in place specifically to allow First Nations to take part in economic development.

And one I didn't mention is the aboriginal procurement policy, which again we hope will support aboriginal businesses in their business relationships with government.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'm going to switch gears a little bit again. We spent some time yesterday talking about education, and education on reserves is largely federal, the different education levels. But there are some schools that are predominantly First Nation that aren't under federal. That would be Moosonee, Moose Factory; right? Would they be better? Would schools—and I believe they're lumped in now with Timmins—be better with their own micro school board which would actually understand the issues as opposed to me trying to understand their issues, sitting in Timmins or Earlton?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's very interesting that you asked me that question because actually when—you're talking about the Moosonee and Moose Factory boards?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I certainly won't speak for the current minister, and you may want to ask her this question directly, but I will say to you that when I was the Minister of Education we actually embarked on exactly that project to attempt to facilitate a discussion among all the school boards, because there was a very small Catholic board, the public board and then there was the First Nations school. My hope was that there could be a community discussion, and I was in Moosonee and I was in Moose Factory and met with the various trustees. We weren't able to reach a resolution. It was my thought that we have 72 school boards in Ontario and perhaps there could be a 73rd board that would be of a different model, but we couldn't reach a consensus on that.

The concept, though, that there is a different way of delivering education in some of the more remote communities and that there needs to be a different kind of co-operation among the federal government, the provincial government and the First Nations delivery organizations I think is at the core of some of the work that we're doing right now. Unfortunately, we couldn't get there in Moosonee. That was a number of years ago, when I was the Minister of Education. There may be another conversation that needs to happen. But I'm certainly, as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, open to being part of those kinds of conversations and calling Canada to the table to have those conversations with us.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'm glad to hear that you would be willing to perhaps revisit this, because in our view, if we could create it in one place, perhaps, as part of the conversation we could say, "It's possible. Look at how we do it here" So we could show the feds, "Look, it is possible to actually"—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But you know, Mr. Vanthof, I think one of the things that really has to happen is that—and this is a learning for me. The impetus



for that kind of collaboration can be facilitated by government, but there has to be a willing community to take part in that. That is not something that can be imposed on a community. It really has to grow up from the community and people have to be willing.

My concern was that there were resources that could be shared among all of the schools and in fact with the municipality. I'll be honest with you: As recently as this past week, when I was at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, I suggested to the Moosonee councillors who came to visit me, the local government people, that maybe they would want to speak with the school boards about sharing resources, because there are public spaces in those schools and there are resources that are funded by governments that could be of use to people in the community; I used the library as a specific example of that.

I think that whatever we can do as MPPs, as ministers, as ministries to encourage co-operation among various school boards, among school authorities and among municipal governments with those education institutions, we should be doing that. I think it's something that is part of our responsibility because it means that all of the members of the community, aboriginal or not, have more access to those public resources. It's something that we can each do as a local MPP.

1610

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'm happy to hear that, because I really think that that's something—it's not as big of a problem in the south, but in the north, in an area like Moosonee or Moose Factory, it's a huge problem. As boards, that's something we experience in the north, not just First Nations, but all of us as all types of boards—representation by population. Sometimes, you know, you're actually going into—and as a former Minister of Education, you would understand this. Eventually, the role of the elected trustee will soon be over in northern Ontario because it's not a full-time job and you're not going to travel 500 miles for an evening meeting, you know? For the First Nations it's an even bigger problem because you're not going to go from Moosonee to Timmins or wherever for a meeting. So right away you're not represented.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think I'm meeting with them next week, actually, the First Nations trustees. One of the groups that I'm very interested in working more closely with is the First Nations trustees who are represented on provincial school boards because they have children from their communities who attend provincial schools. So I think that we have a lot to learn from them about the relationship between those federally funded schools and the on-reserve schools that many of our First Nations kids attend, but also the connection with the provincial schools. So I'm meeting with them—I have met with them previously—and I'm going to be using them as a resource.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** One other comment: We were talking about how hard it is for First Nations kids, let's say, if they're on a reserve until grade 8 and then they go

off-reserve for four years of high school. If you think about it, if my kids went to basically another country for four years of high school, a totally different culture, they wouldn't do any better than a lot of First Nations kids, right? Their problems aren't different and their society isn't really different; their circumstances are incredibly different.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And the geography dictates so much of that, so that becomes part of the calculus of how we find a resolution for these kids in closing that achievement gap.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes. Given that, there's a lot—we're talking long-term; there are a lot of short-term things. So how will the cuts to community start-up maintenance benefit and home repair benefit affect First Nations?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Sorry, say that again?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** How will the cuts to the community start-up and maintenance benefit and home repair benefit affect First Nations people living on reserve?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You're talking about the discretionary—the Ontario Works issue?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We're very aware that there was a concern raised about those changes. As you may or may not know, at this point we're providing First Nations with temporary relief from compliance with the new cost-sharing formula until April 2013. I met with the First Nations leaders. Minister Milloy's staff were there as well. We were concerned that there needed to be some time to resolve some of these issues. What this timeframe will allow us to do is to work with First Nations to better understand how the discretionary benefits were used, to understand the implications of the new cost-sharing arrangements. It is complicated because there is an agreement with Canada. We can then explore some approaches that will allow us to address whatever the unique situations are faced by First Nations communities. Because one of the—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that, I have to stop you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay. We can come back to that.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Okay. Just remember where you were.

Over to the Liberals, Mr. Zimmer

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I guess we had the sort of view from 30,000 feet from my last series of questions, but now I'd like to drill into some black and white stuff, perhaps, economic development.

The new relationship fund: I read over the materials about it and I'm very interested in just what the new relationship fund is and how you envisage that assisting you in your endeavours at the ministry. The new relationship fund, as you recall, was a key recommendation coming out of Justice Linden's report on the Ipperwash inquiry. What's the theory behind it? How does it work? What's your vision for it? Where do you think it's going to take us?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thanks for the question. I talked earlier about my role and our ministry's role as facilitator and coordinator, and I think that concept can really be applied to the new relationship fund, because what it is designed to do is provide communities with the tools that will support the kind of long-term, sustainable economic growth that obviously needs to be in place if there's going to be any kind of effective long-term change. As I said to Mr. Vanthof, it's designed to allow aboriginal communities and organizations to take part in the consultation engagement that's critical to the relationship between government and aboriginal people.

The new relationship fund will provide \$14.5 million in project funding for core consultation capacity agreements and enhanced capacity-building projects in 2012-13. That just means that people who are living in communities will actually be able to travel to where they need to go, have the documents they need to have and get background material together in order to take part.

I think we in government sometimes make assumptions about people being able to take part in discussions. We, as MPPs and ministers, have a lot of staff and a lot of support behind us that allow us to engage in conversations. Staff have staff to support them, which allows them to get background information. All these binders are created by people who provide information and hand me things so that I'm able to take part in a discussion or answer a question. That's not necessarily in place—it's not in place at all—in many of the communities we're talking about. So that kind of capacity, which kind of levels the playing field to some extent and allows us to engage with each other, is really at the core of the new relationship fund.

I've talked about building capacity and participating in real consultation and engagement with provincial and municipal governments, because First Nations and aboriginal people need to be interacting with both orders of government; also allowing cultural mapping projects to assist with the discussions, just to get more information about the communities; initiating community outreach programs to engage elders and youth on land and resource matters; and working with the private sector developing joint venture agreements and initiating economic development projects.

I think it's important that I let the committee know that our ministry has undertaken a program evaluation of the new relationship fund, and I want to share some of the results of that with you, because sometimes there's a lot of fanfare about the initiation of a fund and some of the projects that the fund is able to support, but you don't hear about what the results are.

What we have found is that all the core consultation capacity funding recipients have hired a core consultation point person. So they've actually used that funding to acquire some human resource capacity. Having a core consultation point person has been important in bridging aboriginal communities and organizations and industry, so we've seen those relationships developed because of that extra capacity.

Having an internal consultation protocol in place provides benefits not only for the aboriginal communities and organizations and their members but to industry and government proponents as well. So what we've found is that the level of engagement, the ability to engage, benefits the whole conversation, obviously. It's not just that it allows the aboriginal community to come to the table, but it allows government and the private sector to engage in a more productive way.

The new relationship fund supported the development of a wide range of these partnerships. From 2008-09 to 2011-12, the new relationship fund provided \$51.3 million in funding to support over 465 projects in 135 First Nations, 33 Métis communities and 22 aboriginal organizations—that's a total of 190 recipients—and created more than 480 jobs. I think that's a significant statistic. And since 2008, the 480 jobs, as I said, have been created and the fund has funded administrative and technical training to over 4,300 aboriginal people. That training allows for skills development that will make a lasting difference.

**1620**

So thank you for asking about the new relationship fund because I think it's an important symbol of what we believe, and it is having an impact.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** And if I could just follow up with perhaps some concrete examples of the new relationship fund, actually how it plays out in communities. I know the new relationship fund has had a big effect or played a role in the Big Grassy River First Nation and how they're moving ahead on mining opportunities. For instance, can you give us some detail how the fund—the theory of the fund that you've just explained—and how it actually plays out on the ground, if you will?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You mentioned Big Grassy River First Nation. I talked about the fund hiring those core consultation people. That's what happened at Big Grassy River First Nation. There was a core consultation point person who was hired. What that led to was the development of a process for community decision-making on land and resource issues. There was the establishment of the Big Grassy River elders' advisory council, the development of terms of reference to guide their involvement in the community's land use planning initiative.

You will know that we have put in place frameworks for land use planning, but, again, we need the First Nations and aboriginal communities to be able to take part in that, and so part of the result of the new relationship fund in this community was that they were able to develop a process whereby they could take part in the land use planning.

A comment from the First Nations core consultation point person explains what the new relationship fund has meant for the community, and I'll quote those words: "We regard the success of our initiatives in human terms as well as economic. We have made significant advances toward imparting skills, knowledge and confidence within the community."



Following the signing ceremony between the mining company and the First Nation, one of the elders put into very simple terms what building consultation capacity meant, and what was said was: "I have been to these things before and just sat there. This time I knew exactly why I was there and understood everything they were talking about."

I think that's what capacity means. It means the ability to take part but to also have a role and to understand what the decision-making process is and to be part of that.

The Fort William First Nation, another example, again—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** That's the wind and solar?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, the wind and solar opportunities in the Fort William First Nation. Right now, consultations are under way on a number of renewable energy projects, including an on-reserve wind farm and solar farm as well as a lake wind farm. That core consultation funding has allowed the Fort William First Nation to take part in that consultation.

Another example is the Serpent River First Nation, and they're working on energy resource and economic development opportunities. With new relationship fund support, the Serpent River First Nation undertook a number of projects in 2010-11 and the money from the new relationship fund, again, was used to hire a core consultation point person and has led to the drafting of a land use plan, the development of an internal consultation protocol, community presentations on topics such as hydro power, wind power, aquaculture, aggregate development and potential industry partners, and has also provided the opportunity for some special sessions to the community to improve and enhance the awareness of employment opportunities in land resources and economic development.

It's interesting. It ties back to something I said yesterday about exposure and opportunity. One of the things that the new relationship fund provides is access to information about opportunities: Who are the potential players? Who could we be connecting with? How do we do that? Where do we find the information about those opportunities? It has allowed for the reduction of isolation from those economic opportunities.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** That's sort of on the operating side, but then of course there's a great need for capital dollars for aboriginal communities to do the things that communities do with capital dollars. I understand that the aboriginal community capital grants program is in fact getting capital for capital projects into the hands of communities. I was particularly interested in—and I apologize; I'm going to have trouble pronouncing this First Nation—the Aamjiwnaang First Nation community centre. It has, I understand, been the beneficiary of some capital grants, as has the Kingfisher Lake First Nation and the Ontario Native Women's Association community centre. I think those are fine examples of capital dollars wisely spent. I wonder if you could give us a little bit of—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. I'll give you the details on those three in particular, but there are business

centres and friendship centres around the province that have benefited from these capital grants. What it has meant is that in many cases, old buildings that really were disintegrating or buildings that didn't have upgraded technology have been able to upgrade and provide much better space for people in the community.

On those three, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation community centre—that was a grant of \$500,000 that helped to build a community centre. It has become a focal point for the social and cultural activities on the reserve. More than just the space, it has allowed for the development of activities like the healthy babies and diabetes program. So the capital dollars are tied to the provision of programs that can really promote health and wellness. Some of them are dealing with the issues that are at the root of poverty.

Kingfisher Lake First Nation is one of the communities that has developed a small business centre. There was a grant of \$750,000 that supported that small business centre. Eleven jobs were created as a result of the project: two jobs related to facility operations and nine jobs by tenant businesses in that centre.

The Ontario Native Women's Association community centre: A grant of \$500,000 assisted ONWA to build its own community centre, and 11 jobs were created as a result of the project. We anticipate that more than 10,000 clients will be served through the new centre.

As I said, there's a range of those kinds of projects around the province that allows for the creation of new jobs, for the bringing together of aboriginal organizations to provide hubs of activity, information and resource-sharing and at the same time provide the kind of programming that members of the aboriginal community are looking for.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I have a question that's sort of dear to my heart. I've been up there travelling around, and one of the things that just pulls at my heartstrings—I see youth, I see 11- and 12-, 13-, 14-, 15-, 16-year-olds, and in these small, isolated communities, they do their schooling and so on, and unlike their peer groups in southern Ontario, in the non-aboriginal community—down here in the south, we have a rich availability of extracurricular activities. You can go to school and you can go to this club and you can go to this club and you can do a trip. Parents can keep their children occupied after school, all evening long and on the weekends, and it develops confidence, skill sets, hobbies and interests, and it fires up their imagination, their ambition and all of those things.

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But I get the sense, in walking through some of those communities, particularly Attawapiskat and in the Far North, when I see the people in that age group—I don't see them in the classroom, but I see them outside on the streets of the community, and I get the sense that at some level there's just nothing much for them to do and that terrible, terrible boredom sets in. If you bore someone sufficiently, you know, anxieties and depressions and all of that set in. And I've always thought how sad that is

that they don't have the same extracurricular sort of mental activities. I know that there's something where they were reaching out to private partners to help them with these ideas, and get them involved. Can you elaborate on how you feel about that issue of having these people sit there and be bored to death?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, I agree with you. When I was at Pikangikum, we were driving out of the community, and there was a young kid with hockey equipment over his back, walking to the arena. It was a long walk to the arena in the dark, and one of the things that one of the leaders said to me was that they needed more equipment, so we've tried to work to get some more equipment to the community.

I think I talked yesterday about working with Right to Play.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Right to Play organization has engaged the private sector to a very large extent. We have put some money in too—about \$1 million a year—and we are supporting the development and the expansion of this program called Promoting Life-skills in Aboriginal Youth, the PLAY initiative. It's the program that we've put in place with Right to Play to help young people develop their—really, these are leadership life skills that they will be able to use for the rest of their lives. But, at the same time, what the program does is it actually provides activities, equipment and opportunities for kids to learn to play games and be involved in something before and after school.

We've engaged four pilot communities—so Moose Cree First Nation, Sandy Lake First Nation, Marten Falls First Nation and Wapekeka First Nation—in the design of these programs that are benefiting their communities, but there are 39 partner communities that are involved in the leadership program. So there are some intensive activity-based programs in some of those pilot communities, and then the leadership program is much broader.

We calculate that our support is helping more than 1,000 aboriginal youth to develop some of these skills, and as of June this year, there were 134 youth-led events that had been planned and hosted across those 39 communities. So the young people who are part of the leadership program are developing life skills, but they're also providing programming for kids in their communities. They work with some of the younger kids and provide events.

I have a quote from Grand Chief Randall Phillips of AIAI, who says, "It's not just this notion about Right to Play. It's about leadership. It's also about training. It's about skill set development. Then you take that back home and put it to community use. I can't see how, when people find out about it, they won't be excited to participate." He said that August 5 last year, and that was as we were getting the program under way.

There has been a lot of excitement about the engagement with Right to Play. Not that long ago—a couple of months ago—I met with some of the private sector partners, and we brought in new private sector partners to

try to engage them in being part of the Right to Play, because this is definitely not something that is strictly a government initiative. This is about the First Nations communities, the private sector and government working together to provide these opportunities for kids.

Having said that—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No, no. I'm going to stop you right there.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** All right.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'll come back to it.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Think about what you want, and back to the Conservatives.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, yesterday with Mr. Barrett we talked a little bit about Caledonia. He gave us a history lesson, actually.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Do you want any more information on Caldwell?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm sorry?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Do you want any more information on Caldwell?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Oh yes, sure.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Because I do have some. I don't mean to interrupt you, Mr. Nicholls, but I do have some more information if you'd be interested.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You know, I would be, actually. If you have some more of that, that would be fine.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I do.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Boy, when you say you're going to get back, you get back in a hurry.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Exactly. We don't mess around.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Neither do we.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to read to you what my folks have been able to determine.

It was a pre-Confederation land claim filed and settled with Canada in 2011, and Ontario was not a party to this agreement. We understand that the agreement provided cash compensation totalling \$105 million and that this money can be used by the First Nation for economic development or buying land available on the open market. According to the federal media release, the First Nation is able to purchase up to 6,540 acres of land and ask Canada to add these to their reserve. I'm assuming they would have to go through the addition-to-reserve process with Canada.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** I think the one point to make here is that Caldwell is one of the very few First Nations that is landless. They don't currently have a reserve. So this will be a reserve.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And it will enable the Caldwell First Nation to actually establish a home community.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. I think—I stand to be corrected—that it's down in the Leamington area that they are now. Is that what you're—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Leamington area, yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The Leamington area? Okay.

Were you able to identify how many members of the Caldwell First Nation there are?



**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No. Because we weren't party to that process, we don't necessarily have that level of detail.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's more of a federal thing.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, we weren't at the party.

You were asking for some details about the Wabigoon settlement. There are no conditions on the dollars. So of that \$27 million, there were no conditions on how that was to be spent. It's compensation for the provincial wrongdoing, i.e. the flooding. The First Nation has established a trust, and the trustees get to choose how that money is going to be spent; they're able to do that.

The media has reported that the First Nation has made a payout to its members. That's their internal decision, but that is what I was told at the time I went to Wabigoon Lake.

When I was in the community, I had the opportunity to visit a tree nursery. There were six million baby trees, and they—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Wow. I wouldn't want to have had to count those.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It was unbelievable. They plant six million of these seedlings and four million live, apparently, and they have contracts with companies to reforest where there has been logging. Part of that \$27 million supported that economic development.

The other thing they were growing that's not in the note—they were growing grapes in the greenhouse. I don't know: Maybe there's a winery coming.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No comment.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It was beautiful.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Excellent. I appreciate that. Thanks for the insight. I really and truly appreciate that.

Again, compliments to your staff, who were so quick and efficient in getting the information.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** They are awesome.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I appreciate that very much.

If I can just kind of backtrack a little bit, as I mentioned, Mr. Barrett gave us a bit of a history lesson on Caledonia yesterday when he was here. I would just kind of like to address a couple of quick questions regarding Caledonia, if I may.

It's well known that the current situation in Caledonia is holding up a \$100-million transmission line project that would in fact supply power to the surrounding area. I guess my question to you, and forgive me if it's a repeat, but have you or your ministry addressed the issue with native occupiers in your recent visits to Caledonia?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I have tried to do—and I think I said some of this yesterday.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I have tried to do since I was appointed to this ministry is meet with all the parties, which I have done.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Build relationships.

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. I've tried to build those relationships. There are complex internal conflicts,

and we are not, as the provincial government, going to be able to resolve all of those.

There's a conversation between the community writ large and the companies interested in energy development on the territory, and those are again complex conversations made more complex because of internal issues within the community. I have seen it as my job to get to understand the perspectives of all of the players. By that, I mean the groups within the Six Nations, the First Nations community, but also the municipalities. That's why I've met with the mayors, to say to them that I'm open to everybody coming together, and specifically I'm interested in engaging with the municipalities, the businesses and Six Nations to try to find some solutions that arise around development, to look at the uses of the Douglas Creek Estates property.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I appreciate that, too. I guess I'm concerned about why it has taken so long and what are the real issues. Because sometimes, the longer it goes on, the real issues become a little foggy and as a result other issues tend to take over. I guess I'm just concerned. I appreciate the fact that you are working at building relationships. What is the real issue behind it all?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There have been some resolutions. The Six Nations elected council conducted a community engagement process that went from March 5 to April 3 of this year, 2012. They were consulting on participation with Samsung in the Grand Renewable Energy Park. I think that's one of the projects that you might be referring to. As a result, the Six Nations elected council finalized an agreement with Samsung. Now Samsung and the Haudenosaunee Development Institute, HDI, which was created by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chiefs' council, is currently negotiating a separate benefit agreement.

It's not that nothing is happening. Those issues are complex, but there has been some resolution to some of them. Where we're engaged is on the Douglas Creek Estates, and I understand that there are lots of concerns about that. That's why I've tried to work with the various players to see if we can begin a conversation about the use of that land.

Underlying all of that, and Mr. Barrett was skirting around it yesterday, is a land claim that some recognize and some don't, but the federal government has to be part of that conversation. That's why, in my opinion, there hasn't been as much progress as there could have been, because we haven't had the federal government at the table for a matter—it's years now.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Since 2009.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Since 2009. Since 2009, the federal government has not engaged in this conversation. It's not surprising to me that we haven't been able to move forward.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Because that's three years now. I do know that the situation down there at times has been a little intense.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, and I think that we can, as a provincial government, work to facilitate a con-

versation about some narrow issues, but the underlying issue is, if the federal government doesn't come to the table, that 200-year-old land claim can't be resolved, because the federal government is part of that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I see. Thank you for that, too.

Back on March 13, a recent article in the *Toronto Sun* noted that the province is paying utilities for those occupied homes in Douglas Creek Estates. At present, \$40,000 has been paid out by now—nearly \$420 a month. Was it your recommendation that the government pay for the utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to ask one of my staff members to speak to this, but as I said yesterday, all of those expenditures are on our website and I think you can have access to those. We have a responsibility for the safety of the site. I'm going to ask—who am I going to ask to come forward? Laurie?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** While they're looking, maybe I can ask you a quick question. When you said you're responsible for the safety of the site, can you elaborate on that for me just a little bit, please?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to ask Laurie LeBlanc to speak to this.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** All right. Thanks a lot.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** So, as part of the arrangement—and I'm sorry, I'm just looking at my reference to my notes here—we wanted to ensure that we paid the hydro and kept the lights on. "Safety" really means on the site itself. We want to make sure that it's kept up, it's maintained, and I believe this is through Infrastructure Ontario. So—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, through the Ministry of Infrastructure.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** That's right.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In fact, I had a question from someone—a councillor from the community, from the municipality actually—at AMO last week about the cutting of the grass, for example, and the Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for making sure that the grass is cut. The question was, there was some detritus, some garbage that had been thrown on the site, and the grass hadn't been cut under the garbage. Infrastructure had asked that the community members take that stuff off the site and the grass was cut around it. So there are issues like that.

If you've seen the site, it's very large. There are lots of weeds growing on it, so it does need to be kept in some kind of repair. So the Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Maybe we need to talk to the Ministry of the Environment—a little weed control out there, something along those lines.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Although actually maybe we could bring in some grubs from other parts of Ontario—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Down in our area where it's been quite dry, you might be able to find a few of those.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Maybe just to add to that, it is about \$9,000 a month in the last year or so that the Ministry of Infrastructure pays, and those costs are related

primarily to property tax, hydro, water and sewer and, as we said, cutting the grass and that basic maintenance.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** So a question for you then: Prior to these homes being occupied, the condition of the homes and the property around—good shape? Were they brand new? Were they almost finished?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Are you talking about property on—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** In the Douglas estates.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Douglas Creek?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** In the Douglas Creek Estates, yes. Sorry, I wasn't clear.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** At the time, my understanding—and staff can tell me if there's some supplementary information—is it was in the development stages. So much of the relationship at the time was with the developer. I believe it was Henco, if my memory serves correctly.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** So many of the houses had been built but not yet occupied in that particular development.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** All right. So now, this developer is unable, obviously, to sell the homes that have been put up. He has money invested in these estates. I understand he has tried to go back in, but was unsuccessful and there were a few tense moments, to say the least. So has the government been able to reconcile with this contractor, pay him his expenses, his costs? Can you expand on that for me, please?

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** This, of course, was a number of years ago. There was a great deal of negotiation with the developers. There were also conversations that were going on with the municipal council at the time and some of the businesses. What the government did was establish a number of things, and part of it was basically buying out—Henco was the development company and the builders, so that was part of it, and this is on our website as well.

We provided what we called at the time a business recovery program and a residential assistance program. That was to help some of those individual businesses and homeowners who had a direct impact at the time in 2006.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Is that when those homes were being built? I'm sorry. Is that when they were—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So in July 2006, the \$15.8 million was the amount purchased—we purchased the Douglas Creek Estates. So that's when this was happening.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The Ontario government purchased the Douglas Creek Estates?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It was public infrastructure renewal, which is now Infrastructure Ontario, yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And that was a purchase from Henco Industries.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You know, I think about it and I kind of go "wow." Here's this land, a developer goes in, buys the land, everything goes through; begins building



on the land, then all of a sudden, once he gets it to a certain point, suddenly there's a land claim and there are occupiers who take over and he's unable to finish. Business basically stops for him.

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What were the criteria or what kind of brought it all about? Had there been any advance warning at all that there were going to be any issues with this land? Because the fact is that he was able to go in, and now it has cost the Ontario taxpayers \$15.8 million, I think you said, to I guess reacquire the land. Is that correct, Minister? Would that be a correct term: "reacquire the land" from the—or to pay those kind of damages to the contractor?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to get staff to give me some dates in terms of the land claim, but I just want to repeat what I have said previously, which is that there are other parties to this process who are not here.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I understand.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The federal government is an integral part of finding a resolution on this issue.

I hear you—I mean, you haven't said it explicitly, but this was a difficult situation for this business owner, obviously. They made an investment and were looking to realize a profit and got caught up in what is a very old conflict. What we did as a provincial government was work to resolve the immediate issue, but the larger issue is the land claim that the federal government needs to be part of, and that's why there was a process set in place. As I said, that process has not been able to continue because the federal government has not been part of it since 2009.

Just in terms of the dates and some of the history—

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** If I could just add a little bit: I think, as the minister said yesterday, there are 28 unresolved specific claims filed with Canada. In 1995, Six Nations commenced litigation against government about the land claims. In 1995, the actual litigation started as well. So there were some conversations that were going on before that time, but formal land claim negotiations have not taken place since October 2009. That's essentially when the federal government decided that they were not going to engage any further in that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You didn't say stepping away, just not further engaging at this point in time.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's a fine point.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I don't want to put words in your mouth.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And I don't know how long Henco Industries owned that land. I just don't know that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Don't you find it interesting how—you're saying back in 1995 is when the land claim dispute started.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, a number of them. There are 28.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** A number of them?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay, and yet he was still allowed to go in and build on property where, in fact, there was a

land dispute. To me, that's risky, speaking in business terms, because what would he do if the lands—perhaps he was thinking that once the buildings were built, then they're not going to move them—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I can't speak to that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I know you can't answer that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I can't speak to that dynamic. I can't speak to the motivation or all of what went into Henco Industries making that decision. I can't.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes?

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Just one thing maybe to add from the land claim perspective is that often land claims are on lands that are currently owned—they're fully developed and they are owned by private interests. A large part of the negotiation process is, how do you reconcile that? Sometimes it's a cash—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Compensation.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Compensation. So it's often not about the specific land that the land claim is about, because it currently has other uses. So that's part of the typical process that happens in land claims.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I guess there isn't any one of us in this room—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** You have 40 seconds.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Certainly there isn't one of us in this room that would certainly hope that the homes that we own now won't sooner or later become part of a land claim and we would be forced to vacate as well. That's a little tongue in cheek, I know, respecting the fact that there's a party that perhaps isn't here.

I think my time has pretty much run out now—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You've run the clock.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** —but thanks for your insights, Minister. I appreciate it.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** NDP?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Chair. The last time I had a turn, I think we had just started the discussion, Minister, regarding the changes in OW and ODSP and how they would affect First Nations.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Right. I'll just go back to what I was saying about the current changes that we're looking at in terms of the discretionary benefits. I think I said that we're providing a year in which to have that conversation, till April 2013. What I was going to say when we ended was that one of the things that is going to be part of that discussion—and we have talked about this with some of the leadership—is the way these discretionary benefits have been used. There's a wide range, across the province, of uses for these discretionary benefits. We just need to get a handle on what it is these are for. They typically have been for health concerns, short-term issues, but in some places, they have been used for housing and some capital investments. Technically, that's not necessarily what they were for. Again—it sounds like I retreat behind this, but I'm not—the reality is that for some of the expenditures, we have questions about whether they're actually things that the federal government has responsibility for and has backed away from.

So there has been some sort of scope creep in terms of these discretionary benefits. That's hypothetical on my part, but it's the kind of question that I think we need to look at: What's the scope of these discretionary benefits? As I say, the Minister of Community and Social Services is working with us on this.

I want to talk just for a moment about how social assistance is funded to give you a bit of background. There is a memorandum of agreement respecting the welfare program for Indians—that's what it is called. It's also referred to as the Indian welfare services, or IWSN, agreement. Colloquially, it's talked about as the 1965 agreement. In that, Ontario assumes responsibility for the provision of provincial welfare programs on First Nations, but then the federal government reimburses Ontario for 92% to 93% of the eligible expenditures. That issue of eligible expenditures becomes part of this conversation: What is eligible for reimbursement and what's not? The Ministry of Community and Social Services administers the IWS agreement on behalf of all of our Ontario ministries, and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development federally administers the IWS agreement and reimburses Ontario on Canada's behalf.

Since the agreement was signed, the federal government has not been providing the same level of services it agreed to in 1965. For instance, child care rates have been capped since 1992, so they've stayed stagnant at the 1992 level. Based on per capita costs, the cost-sharing reimbursement formula is set out in the agreement, and it changes annually. Currently, this agreement, the IWS, covers the following provincial welfare programs: It covers Ontario Works, the financial assistance and employment assistance, with the cost of administration, all of that through the Ministry of Community and Social Services; it covers the child and family services program, child protection and child welfare prevention, which is through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; it covers the child daycare program, and that's through the Ministry of Education; and the homemakers program, through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On the child care: The federal government unilaterally capped that? That was part of the agreement—or they just sent a notice and that was it?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think they just decided to cap it, because it's not something that we would support.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Okay.

I'm not that familiar with this, but I'm going to go on. The community start-up and maintenance benefit and the home repairs benefit were changed lately. How would that affect First Nations, and who funds that part?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think those are both through the Ministry of Community and Social Services. They're all part of this discretionary benefit package that we've been talking about.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It was transferred, in many cases, to municipalities. So how would that affect First Nations? Would it be transferred to them as well?

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** These are administered directly to the First Nations, not through the municipalities. Okay?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Okay. So the changes that affected my municipalities wouldn't affect the First Nations?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What we brought in, the changes to the municipal benefits and to the First Nations benefits, was the same package. But the issue is that in the First Nation communities, they're administered differently, they're reimbursed because of the federal government, and as I say, the scope of those benefits has been different than in the municipalities.

What we did was we worked with the First Nations because what we determined, Mr. Vanthof, was that impact in the First Nations communities was going to be much greater than in municipalities. One of the things that the First Nations said to us was, "As First Nations, we don't have the same recourse as municipalities do, for example, to a tax base or to reserves"—and, by that I mean financial reserves. "We don't have the same tools to backfill or to deal with these costs."

For example, the uploading of costs that we've been engaged in with municipalities that has actually freed up space in their budgets—and we can have a discussion on that wearing my other hat, but that is the reality, that we've been uploading and there's more room, then, for municipalities. That doesn't apply to First Nations because their whole funding structure is different. That's why we felt that it was responsible and reasonable to delay the imposition of this change while we had the conversation with First Nations. It's not a long time. We're talking about April 2013, which will come very quickly, and so we've started that conversation with First Nations to see if we can come to resolution.

I suspect that at some point in that conversation—and Minister Milloy and I and the First Nations leadership will have this conversation, but I suspect at some point we may be going to the federal government and saying, "We've determined that some of these monies were going to fund things that by right should be funded by the federal government." Again, that's hypothetical; I don't know that that's the case, but I'm imagining that may happen.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'm going to go back to some of the issues that Mr. Zimmer brought up about black and white.

On the new relationship fund, how does a band go about applying? What stipulations—is there a limit?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You want the technical process.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** What I want to know is, is it available to all bands or is it available on a trial basis to see if it works?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We have people who are very close to the application of the funds. Can I just ask David de Launay to come up and talk to that issue.

**Mr. David de Launay:** So for the new relationship fund it has two components: one is a core funding component and one is an enhanced funding component.



On the core funding component, every First Nation, as the minister indicated in her earlier remarks, is both eligible and is receiving a core component part. That, generally, as the minister described, provides the capacity then to the First Nation to be involved in consultation efforts and to provide the First Nation's point of view. Whether it's holding the meetings—usually it's a staff person who then can galvanize the community, hold the meetings, bring people together, do the appropriate background work on that.

On the enhanced funding, that is then a more limited pot of money that's in the \$14.5 million that we have every year for funding, and we're always oversubscribed for it. It's projects where First Nations would want to be, for instance, more involved in an economic project, so they would bring forward to us a proposal for how they could become more involved. Then we have fairly rigorous criteria for assessing all these projects and determining which ones will get funded. As I say, it's oversubscribed, so there are project proposals that don't get funded.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I think it's maybe something different than I thought it was. So in a case like the First Nations dealing with the Ring of Fire, is there extra money available for them to consult with the government? Because they're going to be consulting on a much greater basis.

**Mr. David de Launay:** Usually with big projects that ministries have, the ministries themselves will also have funds that they make available to be involved with communities. This is a good question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, because I know they have put aside—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I've got lots of good questions for him.

**Mr. David de Launay:** Yes. But at the same time, these communities are eligible for the new relationship funding. I think the minister talked about the training funds that we had in place for northern communities, and communities in the Ring of Fire are eligible for that. We have a number of sources where they can get money.

But I think an important consideration is that line ministries also make monies available for communities to be involved in projects, and the Ring of Fire would be an example of that as well.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And if I can just add to that, there are a number of ministries involved in the work around the Ring of Fire, so we are actually looking across ministries to see where those pots of money are that can be kind of focused and targeted at providing the supports that are needed. For example, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: We're in conversation with them about what kind of training dollars might be available specifically for Ring of Fire projects. The new relationship fund: What are the projects that might benefit communities that are getting ready for engagement on the Ring of Fire? It's existing funding, and it's across government.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Because what I'm hoping—what I'm looking for—in a case like the Ring of Fire, the

quality of the consultation would depend on the quality of the resources that they have, and for both our benefit, because if you have a good consultation process—one of the things that really bothers us in northern Ontario is, what we perceive as lack of consultation actually slows down development instead of speeding it up. You're going to have to face the issues sometime, and you might as well face them up front.

I don't think anyone should have an open chequebook, but how is the process where the First Nations can say, "Okay, we need this and this and this"—or do they have to bargain for the money to hold an adequate consultation? Because at the end of the day, the more we consult at the front—and I can give you examples of where there was lack of consultation, or lack of formal consultation or whatever, where there's no project today where there should have been.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. I'm going to just answer at a high level, and I'm going to ask David de Launay to fill in the specifics.

I agree with you. There absolutely does need to be up-front consultation, but I'm going to go back to a comment that I made yesterday to Mr. Zimmer about the nature of consultation and making sure, as we spend these dollars, as First Nations and aboriginal communities build capacity, that we're clear on what it is we're consulting about, that we have good parameters to the conversation, and that we evaluate together what's working and what's not working. What we don't want to do is collectively put money into process that is process for the sake of process, right?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Granted.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Because that's not in the best interests of the economic development of aboriginal communities. It's dollars that go into process that leads to a good outcome, that leads to action, that leads to a company getting money or a young person getting training or an older person getting back into training, or that provides health supports for a community. Those are the kinds of consultations that we need to make sure we're engaged in.

Just in terms of the process, David?

**Mr. David de Launay:** Right. Again, we have in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs these different sources of funding that are generally available to First Nation communities, that, in your example of the Ring of Fire, those communities can avail themselves of.

But also, the way the line ministries work is to fund consultation processes when they're involved in activities. Again, speaking of the Ring of Fire—and prior to joining MAA, I worked with natural resources for years. We would be involved, for instance, with aboriginal affairs and northern development and mines, with those communities. The memorandum of co-operation that the minister referred to yesterday was initially a joint discussion with the three ministries, and each of the ministries was providing dollars for the consultation effort. That's generally how it's done. So whether it's the Ring of Fire, or there may be another mining proposal

going on—and the same approach will be taken by the ministries. Where there may be a forestry activity going on, the Ministry of Natural Resources will involve the local First Nations, and usually it includes a component of funding the local First Nation so that it has the capacity to be involved in the consultation. That's generally the approach.

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In general, as well, the Supreme Court cases have been clearer and clearer about our obligations to consult and accommodate, and we are taking that more and more seriously in light of those decisions. Therefore, it's something that ministries are involved in, whether they're resources ministries, like the ones I've mentioned, or social ministries, such as children and youth services or education and others. This is becoming much, much more widespread. Generally, ministries support communities to be involved in these consultations.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And I think it would be fair to say that we're retooling and refining the processes whereby we engage with aboriginal people. That's why in my initial remarks I talked about how, when we came into office in 2003, we were determined to do what we needed to do to change the relationship and to establish a different relationship with aboriginal people. You have to do some concrete things to make that happen. Across a whole range of communities in Ontario, there has been money invested through the new relationship fund to do just that.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'll go back to some of my original comments. One of the things, when I talk to First Nations, that causes them and, in the end, causes us all grief is that they, like any other society, have a competitive element. The lack of an overall framework means that if one First Nation thinks that the other one got more, it creates divisions with the First Nations. That's what happened at Wahgoshig. There's a lack of a framework. Everyone is doing something, but—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So you're talking about lack of a funding framework—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** No.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —or consultation?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes, lack of a consultation framework.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, as David said, there is increasing pressure on governments to have good consultation guidelines in place. We know that. We have a set of guidelines, and we know that those are going to have to be refined and more formalized over time.

**Mr. David de Launay:** And also that ministries are responsible for—because it's, again, ministries that have the program. If you have a ministry that has a permit or a licence, then that is the action that is potentially impacting on aboriginal or treaty rights and therefore needs to be consulted on.

On the resource industry side, it would be natural resources that would say, "Well, we're going to give this land use permit or this work permit," or whatever it is, and that may have an impact. Therefore, we have a duty

to consult on that. Each ministry, then, takes an approach on how they may impact. In the example you started with, Wahgoshig, MNDM would initiate that.

In MAA, again, the facilitation role, as the minister has talked about, is to try to give general guidance and an interpretation of those legal decisions of the Supreme Court and give them some policy meaning and framing to them so that line ministries can then go out and do the appropriate consultation, depending on what activity they're undertaking.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And I—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** I'm going to stop you right there. Think about this.

And on to you.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Mr. Craitor had some questions.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Thanks. I have a couple of questions, Minister.

First, I just want to share with you that I'm very fortunate, in my riding—I represent Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, but particularly Fort Erie. I have the Fort Erie native centre in my riding, and I must tell you, it has been a wonderful experience for the last nine years to be involved with that part of my community. I love going to their powwows. They have the summer and the midwinter powwows. I love the regalia that they wear. I have a better understanding of the significance of it, what it means. I've learned to play the drums, which is quite an art, but more importantly, I've learned to understand the message of these drums and what they mean to the community. It has been just a great opportunity for me to be involved in that community.

One of the things I have to tell you, Minister—and I know you'll appreciate this, because at one time you were the Minister of Education—is that they have a program there called Head Start. That's where the little kids, before they go into school—kind of like what we have, all-day kindergarten, but this is before they go into school. They have the young kids and the parents come in. They have a graduation, and when you go to the graduation, it's almost like you're going to a university graduation or a high school graduation, because they have the caps, they have the uniforms. I've tried to correct them: They have blue uniforms. I'm always saying, "You should have red uniforms." But they have the blue uniforms. They do look good, though. I've always gone—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I always go—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** For those of you who are watching, I'm being interrupted by the opposition. I just want you to know.

I've always gone to their graduations. I mentioned at one of their graduations, "I've been coming for three or four years, and I've yet to graduate." So the following year, lo and behold, they had me sit up with the little kids, they had a gown made up for me, they gave me a cap, and I sat there and I graduated. My graduation certificate sits in the front of my office, when you come in.



So I'm just sharing with you that I've learned a lot about that community.

We're having the bicentennial of the War of 1812. Certainly, in my riding, it's huge, this event that's taking place. It wasn't that long ago that I had the opportunity of partnering with a member from the NDP and from the Conservatives to introduce a bill to recognize Sir Isaac Brock and had the opportunity to wear the uniform in Parliament.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You did.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** That was pretty cool.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It was red.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** It was red. Thank you, Rob.

I will tell you—and I wanted to get your comments—I learned even more about the role that the aboriginal community played in defining Canada, with Tecumseh, and how they supported the British. Who knows what would have happened to Canada, where we might be, if they had not been actively involved? I have to say this, Minister: Sometimes I feel that they don't get the kind of recognition they deserve, because everything is around the British and the people who were living in Canada at the time. My question to you is, in your role, does that subject come up? Do you hear from the aboriginal community on how they feel about the impact and the important role that they played in defining Canada, and where we would be if it had not been for them standing up and becoming partners with the British?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Standing shoulder to shoulder. Yes, on that specific issue, on the War of 1812, but more generally, indeed, the whole question of how we have written history, how we have read history for the last 100 to 200 years, who we've written out of history or written into history, I think is a very important, if not fundamental, discussion between us and aboriginals—First Nations, Métis and Inuit. I think it's a conversation with all aboriginal people. It's one of the reasons that I believe that our history and the way it's taught is changing and has to change. Because it is in schools where we get our first notion of who we are as Canadians, how the country was formed and who the players were in all of that.

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It's one of the reasons that the aboriginal education strategy that has been in place through the Ministry of Education for a number of years is so important, but it's also why, I believe, we need to do a much better job across all of the grades and across the curriculum in informing the curriculum with information—and better information—about the role of aboriginal people *vis-à-vis* not just the founding of the country but pre-Canada, pre-Confederation and the very beginnings of the nation at contact. I've said this to many gatherings of aboriginal and non-aboriginal people alike. I think we need to do a much better job across the curriculum of writing history that reflects all of the people who lived here and who live here, all of the groups of people who were here and who came here. I think it's very important.

I think the bicentennial of the War of 1812 has actually raised this issue to the conscious level. I think that

many more people are thinking about it. There have been articles in the paper; there have been pieces on television that I think have helped people to think about who was actually involved in that story.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Thank you—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Can I just say that in terms of supporting the initiatives, our ministry has been able to fund the Chiefs of Ontario in a couple of ways: in 2011-12, \$50,000 to hire a scriptwriter to further develop the script for theatrical production on the War of 1812, on the role of aboriginal people; and then, for 2012-13, \$25,000 for the production of a youth welcome video on the same subject. We were able to put some concrete support in place for those celebrations.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Do you mind if we just have one other question?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** With the Fort Erie native centre—I don't know if it's the right term, but it's land-based; it's in the community. It's a very large organization for that community. Does your ministry—and I don't know; I'm asking this because I don't know. I know there are different applications they make for funding. They have different programs they'd like to offer to their community, to their children. Because I know they've said to me that they don't come through your ministry; they go through other programs. Is there a reason why? Is there a difference between being up north and being down in Fort Erie?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The friendship centres get their funding from a number of different places. They get some of their funding through the Ministry of Health. They get some funding through, in some cases, the federal government, so there are federal programs that are run out of friendship centres. There's really a patchwork of programs. There's an urban aboriginal strategy that the federal government has got in place and some funding flows to the friendship centres through that. We fund the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres to the tune of \$789,284. I don't know exactly what the level of funding is for your centre, but we do flow money through the friendship centres.

The local centres would get their funding through the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. I don't know which program exactly you're asking about. It may be a program that's funded through the federal government or, if it's funded through us, it comes through the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. We fund the central organization, and they fund the local organizations. Okay?

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Thank you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But if there's a specific question about that centre, I'm happy to get the information for you.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I appreciate that. Thank you.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Just following up Mr. Craiton on his question about the War of 1812, I was in New York City about a year and a half ago, and I came across a display or an information piece in one of the skyscrapers in

New York City, in Manhattan. I found it quite by accident, but that's where I learned about the huge role that the aboriginal communities—I guess it's the Mohawks down in southeastern Ontario, Cornwall and those places—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Down by Akwesasne.

**Mr. David Zimmer:**—played in the construction of American skyscrapers, and they're highly and well recognized in New York for that contribution.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** For working at those heights, yes.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes, the Empire State Building and so on. And the gist of the display was that but for that aboriginal contribution, maybe New York wouldn't have the—but it's interesting that I had to go to New York, really, to find out that piece of information.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, exactly. Another thing that our ministry has done is produce profiles of aboriginal veterans, and I don't think people recognize that there isn't any segment of Canadian society that's volunteered in time of war more than the aboriginal community. I think those kinds of facts need to be part of the consciousness of all of us, and the only way that's going to happen is if it happens through our school system.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** An area that we haven't touched on is the relationship or the role of your ministry with respect to Métis affairs, because it sort of bridges into and bumps up against aboriginal affairs. As you know, Minister, in some ways there's a slightly different mindset in the Métis community on a number of issues that play out in the aboriginal community. I wonder if you might, on a very general level, in whatever detail you want to, tell us how the ministry balances these, if you will, many sometimes competing agendas or at least agendas that bump up against each other in the aboriginal and the Métis community.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We have a really strong working relationship with the Métis Nation of Ontario. We have signed memoranda of understanding. There are separate ministries that have signed memoranda of understanding with the Métis Nation of Ontario. We have put in place the Voyageur fund, which is the \$30 million that will be, over 10 years, spent on Métis businesses, and we just had a great celebration of the launch of that fund. So I would say, just as a working principle, that we have come a long way in terms of that relationship with the Métis Nation of Ontario.

I think that one of the interesting things that has happened as a part of the aboriginal education strategy and the self-identification that has gone on in the school system and in the broader society is that there are more people who are self-identifying as part of the Métis Nation and all that that entails. You know, I'm not part of the Métis Nation, so I don't have a visceral sense of what that means or what it is, but there are criteria, and there are lots of reasons that over the years Métis families have not identified as Métis, because there was lots of discrimination that was rampant, people being neither one

nor the other, and lots of confusion about what the Métis Nation actually was. I think that as a result of litigation and court decisions and relationships with government, there's a new status in terms of the Métis people in the province and, as I say, we have found working with the Métis Nation of Ontario a very productive and collaborative process.

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I think you identified that there are lots of competing interests. I think that's true. I think that there are, again, historic competing interests. When Gary Lipinski, who is the leader of the Métis Nation of Ontario—he was just re-elected—comes to talk to me, there are often issues of hunting, harvesting rights and some of those territorial issues that are very complicated. In some ways, they're not—that First Nation territorial issues are straightforward, but some of the Métis Nation issues are even more complex than the First Nation issues.

Again, it's a long-term relationship. It's one that has lots of potential. To go back to the issue that Mr. Craitor raised about history, I think that there's a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of not just First Nation history, but also Métis history. That's why we talk about aboriginal history and aboriginal people across the province.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I wonder if I might just ask this question also, because I've received some calls from the aboriginal community making this sort of inquiry; that is, the aboriginal community that's involved in operating casinos and so on. They're aware that in some ways, the government is, if I can use this expression, "reviewing" its casino strategy. It's created some—"anxiety" is too strong a word, but some concerns that they may or may not get taken into the consultation.

I'll give you one example. There's a casino in the Scugog First Nation, the Blue Heron. They, in a very responsible and polite way, have called and said, "We are really close to Toronto. How's that going to play out vis-à-vis us? What vehicle can we use to get our points of view across?" and so on. Do you have any comments for that community?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Only to say that I think I referred earlier in the economic development question to the overall gaming revenue arrangements that are in place so that as the government, as OLG reviews the gaming industry in the province, any increased capacity is going to benefit First Nations.

Having said that, I think the point that you're making is that there are various communities, and the Scugog is not the only community that's interested in expanding, having a casino or developing their own casino. But that's a conversation that has to go on with the folks who are making those gaming decisions. That's not something that we have any final decision-making authority on. But what we do do is, we make sure that those proposals and those requests find their way to the right people who are engaged in that decision-making process, and I know that you've been very helpful assisting in being a conduit for that information and making sure that people from the First Nations community have the opportunity to talk with folks either in finance or in gaming.



**Mr. David Zimmer:** I think that's a fine example of your view of the role of the ministry in your opening remarks, as a facilitator to help people steer through the system and help them to get their points of view across and understood and so on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The gaming and casino discussion is one part of that economic development discussion. With many conversations with communities, there will be an energy proposal, there will be a casino proposal, there will be a training proposal. It's good to have those kinds of community discussions. It's good to have options. It's good to think about what the overall vision is for an economic plan. It goes back to my conversation with Mr. Barrett yesterday, where there are communities that are engaged in one industry, that they may want to diversify. I think that there's not going to be a casino on every reserve, in every community. There's just not going to be. But I think that conversation of "Where is it appropriate?" and "Where is the best business case?" is the one that has to happen. As you say, we can facilitate that conversation and help the aboriginal community to have the conversation with government.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And with that, we're going to stop you.

On to the Conservatives.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Minister. I'm always very interested in the kinds of selections that the Liberal MPPs make when they come to estimates. Certainly we had a great, encouraging discussion with francophone affairs. I am always wondering when we're going to find that smoking gun that they're looking for with respect to the ministries that they're trying to examine. I still haven't—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** You should have been here for the Minister of Energy. That's when—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** There were a lot of smoking guns there, that's for sure. But you have to note, Mr. Zimmer, that that was our choice, and we had a clear path to take with that. I haven't really quite discovered your path yet, and I'm listening with amusement—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But you're very interested in everything that I've had to say, right?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Absolutely. Well, you know, Minister, to be perfectly frank, during my time in academia, I actually did some work in aboriginal policy, so I'm hopeful that we'll have a very interesting and good conversation about that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I look forward to it.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** My first question actually relates to the estimates with respect to your Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. I notice—and this is just a question of interest to get a further understanding of what has gone on in your ministry. I'm looking at the results-based plan briefing book, 2012-13, that your ministry has provided members of this committee. On page—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thirty-three?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Good question. I'm actually before that. I'm looking at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, table 2, operating capital summary.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Do you want to just give me a page number?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm going to say 18.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Eighteen?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Oh, it's after 17, yes. I've got it. It's a good guess that it's 18.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The first question I have for you is that under the operating capital expenses that we're about to vote on once we conclude the review of estimates today, under your column "Interim Actuals" for estimates, we have a number of \$97 million and change—\$97,677,814—when the estimates for that year were \$78 million and change. My question is, why is there a discrepancy of nearly \$20 million between the estimates and the interim actuals in the ministry?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So you're asking about the discrepancy?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** That's right.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** My understanding is the discrepancy has to do with land claim settlements, when we go back to treasury board to fill in the money needed for land claims. But I'm going to ask David Lynch to speak to this.

**Mr. David Lynch:** Yes, it's largely three land claims from that year. We put \$1,000 in our estimates against land claims as they occur annually. Then, when there's progress made during the year, we go to treasury board, and we receive the money. In this case, there was the Fort William settlement at just over \$5 million; \$22.8 million for Wabigoon; and \$200,000 for Missanabie Cree First Nation. That's the vast majority of that discrepancy. As you note, it's a large one. That would be typical with our estimates. If you look over a multi-year scan, that would be the story about our up and down.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The \$1,000 is a placeholder, Mr. Leone. We wouldn't try to estimate what the land claim amount would be because we just don't know the timing of those settlements.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So how does the government, if they're preparing budgets for the year, account for potential land claims if they're only putting aside \$1,000 for it?

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**Mr. David Lynch:** Yes. It's the nature of the land claims. As we've discussed here today, often it's the federal government coming to the table and these sorts of things. Our ability to predict—you know, calendarize—when we will reach settlement is difficult. So we just feel that that variability, like I said, with the feds coming to the table or thereabouts—that is not something that from an accounting point of view meets the test that it should be placed in our estimates at that point.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Is it because some years you're not going to have any settlements? Is that generally what happens? I notice there's also the discrepancy between 2010-11 actuals and the interim actuals for 2011-12. It seems it's fairly consistent in sort of the \$70-million range. It just seems to balloon in 2011-12.

**Mr. David Lynch:** And it's back on the same thing we're talking about here. It is land-claim-related, and they're big, they're small, they're whatever.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We try to give treasury board some idea of what land claims are under way, and certainly, when I served on treasury board, we'd get some information about which ones and what the timing might be, but it's just not possible to identify accurately which ones might be settled and which ones might not be.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** In terms of the discrepancy in the value of the three land claims you've mentioned—\$5 million, \$22.8 million and \$200,000—why is there such a large discrepancy between the settlements?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Each one is unique. As we've said before, some of them are cash settlements, some of them have to do with the purchase of land or other hunting and fishing rights, and some of them are larger than others. The Wabigoon Lake—\$27 million—was about a flooding claim and wasn't related to a specific quantum of land. Others are related to specific pieces of geography. So they are all vastly different.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. So where does the discrepancy between the estimates and the interim actuals in the—where does it come from? Where does the money come from? Is there a pool of money that's just—

**Mr. David Lynch:** Sorry, when we—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** That's probably a Minister of Finance question.

**Mr. David Lynch:** I think I can answer it.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. Good.

**Mr. David Lynch:** We seek approval from the board for what we're submitting, approval of the land claim and the provision of the monies to our allocation. But since, as I've said, from an accounting point of view, we don't meet the test that it's been set aside for us; it comes from the contingency fund that the government sets aside, finance sets aside annually.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Interesting contingency fund: I say "interesting" because that's where the gas plant money is coming from. We learned that from the Minister of Finance earlier in estimates as well.

I have a question—I'm just going to find the page. Bear with me here; I thought I marked it off. Okay, I did. This one comes on page 26. It is table 4: Operating Summary by Vote and Standard Account. I'm assuming this is something we're going to be voting on.

In the third column from the left, the middle column in fact, it discusses the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, land claims and self-government initiatives, and there are \$2,000 placed in that—is that a placeholder as well? What does that include?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That \$2,000?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Yes.

**Mr. David Lynch:** That would represent our operating account for land claims of \$1,000 and a capital account for land claims of \$1,000.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay, so it is a placeholder.

**Mr. David Lynch:** Yes, absolutely. Sorry—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm also interested in terms of your involvement in land claims. When my colleague Mr. Nicholls was discussing the Caledonia situation, certainly one of the things that the minister had mentioned was the lack of, I guess, partners. All the partners weren't at the table. Can you explain, for our benefit, the distinction between the federal government's jurisdiction in land claims and the provincial government's responsibilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I can, at a general level, and then I'm going to ask David Didluck to come up.

Again, each land claim is different, depending on what's at stake. For example, the Wabigoon situation was a provincial government and a company that were involved in an economic initiative for which we had to take responsibility. It wasn't a historic territorial land claim. It was about a specific issue that came about because of a specific action of the provincial government. There, the provincial government was involved. Where there's federal involvement in the initial action, or where there's a historic claim, then the federal government is going to be involved. That's the general case.

David, do you want to expand on that?

**Mr. David Didluck:** Sure, Minister. For the information of members: As I think many people know, the Constitution of Canada is quite clear. Section 91(24) of the Constitution puts the responsibility for "Indians"—and I'm quoting terms out of the Constitution, so I don't want to offend any of our aboriginal partners—"and lands reserved for the Indians" as a federal responsibility. That means Indian reserves, Indian people on reserves, are primarily a federal responsibility.

In the land claim world, however, the traditional territories of communities could have historically extended well beyond those reserves. Certainly, the responsibility, as you know, for land and resource management really rests with the province as a constitutional responsibility under section 92.

We know from our work with First Nations, and certainly in our negotiation process, that First Nations have lots of interests in areas of provincial jurisdiction, whether it be as a result of economic development on the land, forestry activity, other natural resource activity. So there's an inherent kind of relationship between the two crowns federally and provincially. Because we have the responsibility for land and resources off-reserve, and the federal government has responsibility for "Indians and lands reserved for the Indians," there is a natural complement in that conversation.

It's not uncommon that an aboriginal community may file, if they deem in their minds that there is an obligation by both crowns, a claim against both governments. We get involved only where there is an assertion by a community, and our job in the land claim process is really to provide an alternative to the courts and, ultimately, direct action, because communities are frustrated and they want resolution to those historic obligations that are rooted right back in the Canadian Constitution.

So for us, it's very much living up to those historic obligations and ensuring that we've responded where we've made decisions.



As the minister noted, at Wabigoon, we made a decision about constructing a dam. We flooded a community, and we needed to make amends to that community.

That's really where the province gets involved. That's the essence of the distinction.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** One of the interesting angles on this is that there is a stance within the aboriginal community that I've heard from a number of people—I heard it when I was in Webequie, actually, at the community meeting—whereby there isn't a distinction between the crowns; that in fact government is government, whether it's federal government or provincial government, and so the approach to the crown is the approach to both governments equally.

I don't think all members of the aboriginal community take that position, but that is a position that does exist within the aboriginal community.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm sorry. I missed your name.

**Mr. David Didluck:** I'm David Didluck. I'm the director of negotiations and acting assistant deputy minister.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I just wanted to make sure. I notice there are a lot of people back there. I'm not sure they're all—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And a lot of them are named David.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Yes, I noticed that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** David Lynch, David Didluck and David de Launay. The three people, apart from Laurie LeBlanc, are all named David, so you are forgiven for being confused.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It makes it quite easy. I guess the OPS wants the Davids in Aboriginal Affairs. It just seems to be something that goes on there.

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, they're all very competent.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It's an interesting thing, the land claims process that exists, and you've mentioned certainly some of the problems—not problems necessarily; well, there are some long-standing problems, but delays and so on. There is a process that has been established. I'm wondering how you or the ministry would categorize the land claims process from a provincial standpoint and from your interactions with the federal government. Do you have any sort of top-of-mind comments on that? Do you believe that the land claims process is an efficient one, and if you don't think it's an efficient one, do you think that there are potential remedies to speed up the process for land claims?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We have undertaken to expedite—I think I said that yesterday. We're working to decrease the amount of time that it takes to actually get to the point where the land claim starts to be discussed. I think we've got a three-year preliminary process that would shorten the front end to the point where you actually get to the table and are able to start to negotiate the land claim. We're trying to make that upfront process more efficient so that we can get to these discussions more expeditiously.

But the fact is that the complex historical and legal issues that are involved, I think by nature, demand that there be a lot of time, that it be very thorough. The negotiations are usually tripartite, so if we look at the Caledonia situation, even if we are eager and willing to get back to the table, if we don't have all the partners there, we can't move it forward.

I think there are lots of barriers to quick process in terms of land claims, and because they involve significant decisions that will have a lasting impact on people's lives, it's right that we take the time that's needed. Do I wish they could go more quickly and we could say we're done? Absolutely, absolutely. But I think that by their nature, they take a long time.

Have I missed anything, David?

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** If I could just add some statistics to that, too, over the last nine years, we've settled 13 claims, and that compares to the 20 years before that where we only settled 18 claims. So it's a slow process, but it's getting, we think, with the emphasis that we're putting on it, more efficient in terms of getting to an answer and getting to the table. So that's something that's really a priority, and it was a recommendation in fact that came out of the Ipperwash inquiry, to deal more expeditiously and respectfully to the land claims process.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So I guess the answer to your question is, it's getting better.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Well, it's good. One of the things that—I don't have a First Nations community in my riding. I do live along the Grand River, so there's certainly—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But that doesn't mean you don't have aboriginal people in your community.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Oh, absolutely. Don't get me wrong. I agree 100% with that, so it's always an important thing.

One of the comments that I've heard previously throughout the process of researching this area is the fact that we continually see more and more new land claims coming forward, and that obviously presents a lot of issues, because certainly the First Nations communities are actively engaged in making sure they understand their territory, their culture, their traditions, their history. That's one thing. And so the other part of that is that everyone else has to study them and come to an agreement on them, and the agreement has to obviously be an agreement between all partners. But sometimes we also find that even within First Nations, there's not always agreement on the sort of validity between the proposed issues.

So if you would want to comment on that, one of the things that might be of interest to explore is whether we can deal with the issue of new claims and how we proceed with them. I don't know how we do that. I don't have any answer for—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** When you say, "deal with the issue of new claims," do you mean trying to reduce the number of new claims?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Get a consensus around the new claims, whether the claims have historical merit, in essence, and how do you do that?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, I think we have to think about it in this way—this is my opinion, given my time in this ministry. I think we have to, as new information arises—and new information can be about a land claim, residential schools or a decision made by a company or an industry at some point in history; there's all sorts of new information that comes up. I think we have an obligation—I think we can argue we have a constitutional obligation—certainly in the area of land claims to deal with that new information and those new claims as they arise. So I don't think it is something that we would countenance, that we would try to find a way to suppress or pre-empt a land claim that was coming forward. I think it's information that has to come in its own time. I don't think it's something that we can either predict or pre-empt. That would be my—

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** And I'm going to leave it at that because the 20 minutes is up.

The time being nearly 6 o'clock and given the fact that the Legislature has now recessed and the fact that almost all of us are going to be here for midnight and probably want to get something to eat—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** No.

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** Oh, yes. You voted for it.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** But in any event, I think this is an appropriate—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Prue):** No. I think, in any event, and since the minister still has more than enough time left, and all of us to question next week, I think it's appropriate that we adjourn at this point. We'll see the minister back here next Tuesday at 9 o'clock. I think there's still a little over two hours left.

Meeting stands adjourned until next Tuesday.

*The committee adjourned at 1757.*









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First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 4 September 2012

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 4 septembre 2012

## Standing Committee on Estimates

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

## Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Ministère des Affaires autochtones



Chair: Michael Prue  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES

Tuesday 4 September 2012

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Mardi 4 septembre 2012

*The committee met at 0904 in room 151.*

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Good morning, honourable members. It is my duty to call upon you to elect an Acting Chair. Are there any nominations? Ms. Campbell.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I nominate MPP Paul Miller.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Do you accept the nomination?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Certainly.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Great. Are there any further nominations?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes. I'd like to nominate Rob Leone because he asks difficult questions, and if we can get him in the Chair that will rein him in, okay? I nominate Rob Leone.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Pursuant to standing order 117 in the sessional paper that was tabled on November 24, 2011, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates must be from the third party, pursuant to an agreement that was—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Then I nominate Sarah Campbell, because I think she'd do a much better job than Paul Miller.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Ms. Campbell, do you accept the nomination?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** No, I don't—but with thanks to the nominator, I guess.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Are there any further nominations?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Can we have speeches?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Maybe a short one.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'd like to hear from Mr. Miller how he would be conducting himself as Chair of this committee before I cast my vote.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Well, the first action will be to throw you out.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, as Ms. Campbell did not accept, I declare the nominations closed and Mr. Miller, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, elected Acting Chair of the committee.

## MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Good morning, committee members—and especially Mr. Zimmer, for his

support and love. We are here to resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, vote 2001. There is a total of two hours and 10 minutes remaining.

When the committee adjourned at the last meeting, the official opposition had just finished its 20-minute rotation.

I recognize the third party. You have 20 minutes.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you. I have gone over some of the draft Hansard. I wasn't able to get all of the draft Hansard—one day was missing—so I apologize if I duplicate.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** No, that's fine. I think we'll just take it as we go.

I'll start off with some questions that pertain to my riding, which I'm fairly certain Mr. Vanthof hasn't covered. Actually, I'd like to start off with some questions I have about the cuts made to the discretionary benefits for chief and council pertaining to Ontario Works. I know that we did have a discussion about that prior to the end of the last session, before we rose in June, but I would like to hear your thoughts as to how and why that decision was made and what can be done to help communities.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Welcome to the committee.

As I mentioned last week, the overarching decision about the changes to benefits had to do with our fiscal situation and, as you know, applies across the province. This is not just an issue that has an impact in First Nations. But we recognize that there were some concerns raised by First Nations about the impact of the cost-sharing of discretionary benefits and the impact that will have on their communities. So what has been decided after meetings with the leadership is we have provided temporary relief from compliance with the new cost-sharing formula until April 2013, because we heard very clearly that there was a difference between the impact on First Nations and on municipalities, because First Nations don't have the same revenue tools to be able to make the changes that they might need to make. So this time frame will give us a better understanding of how First Nations use the discretionary benefits.

One of the issues that has come up in this process is that there's a real unevenness across the province in terms of how the discretionary benefits are used. We need



to get a better handle on that. We'll understand the implications, as I say, of the new cost-sharing arrangements, and then we'll be able to explore some approaches that will actually address some of the unique situations that are faced by the First Nations communities, at the same time recognizing our need to keep program integrity in place and deal with the fiscal sustainability, which is where this comes from in the first place.

0910

I guess one of the things that's most critical to me, and I know to Minister Milloy, is that we make sure that the needs that are meant to be addressed by these discretionary benefits, whether they're temporary health issues or particular challenges that a family is facing, are prescribed, but that when we get into longer-term issues, longer-term housing issues or some of the things that actually should be funded out of different envelopes and some of which should be funded through federal government funding, we make sure that it's clear that those are not part of the discretionary benefits. So that scoping process I think is part of what needs to happen in this year.

We've had that conversation with the First Nations leadership, so I look forward to those discussions happening now.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I did have the opportunity to meet with many First Nation communities in my riding. I have well in excess of 50 communities in my riding alone, and so it's no small task but something that's very important to do, because you can meet with people over the phone, you can write and correspond back and forth with letters, but until you're in the community and you see the conditions and get a feel, a bit, for some of the challenges that the communities are experiencing, you really don't know.

What really surprised me is—when I met with Grassy Narrows First Nation, for example, we talked about what some of the things are that they use their discretionary funds for. They told me—you know, it's no surprise; it's something I've heard time and time from many communities—that they use it to help their community pay their hydro bills. But the part that surprised me was, I asked, "Okay. Well, what's your primary source of heat?" Some communities have electric heat and, understandably, you can understand why it's so high. They told me it's also the very "energy-efficient" CMHC housing that's also guzzling a lot of electricity because they have the air exchangers; they have all of these other things that, despite having brand new windows, good insulation, a solid foundation and all of that stuff, there really is no winning, so to speak. That's something that needs to be addressed.

Also, I talked to many communities—and they use it for things like eyeglasses, helping people get to and from medical appointments; in some cases, rent, where some of their community members rent from CMHC. A big thing is food, right? I mean the cost of food is so expensive in many places across the north, but especially in far-removed communities. Many of the communities that

are in my riding—you know, in the north—are far removed, and that's another reason why hydro is so high, because they aren't paying the typical residential rate, where it's high density. They're very low density, and they're paying extremely high rates.

So I wanted to know what is going to be in place come April or May 2013?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, kudos to you for the travel and the contact that you have. I think we were in Wabigoon Lake at the same, and I know that when you've got as geographically huge a riding as you do, it's a challenge, but the unique nature of every community must make it very rewarding—your ability to see that.

I think you're making my point for me in terms of the range of issues that these discretionary benefits are expected to deal with, and some of the things that you've talked about—for example, the housing infrastructure that some of the folks in these communities are living in, the CMHC housing, some of the repair or lack of repair of those buildings. That's an issue that is huge. You know from the situation in Attawapiskat that the housing discussion with the federal government is very difficult for many First Nations and it's certainly something that I've raised with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs federally, that adequate housing is critical.

But I think to expect somehow that a series of stopgap benefits through the social services envelope will deal with some of those really systemic issues is very problematic. That's one of the reasons that I wanted to have this conversation over the next few months, because what I have said to some of the First Nations folks is that if we get to the point where we can sort out exactly what this discretionary benefit is most useful for and then there are other issues that are much broader and more systemic that need to be dealt with, then I think we're in a much better position to go to the federal government and say, "Look, these are things that are not sustainable."

You've raised another issue, and that's the food security issue, the cost of food. That is a very broad, systemic issue that we have to look at. I think somebody last week talked about the cost of chips and Coke not being different in the north than in the south, but trying to get broccoli is another issue. What are the future initiatives that will provide for better food security and more nutritious food accessibility for communities in the north?

I've had people talk to me about greenhouse projects. I spoke last week about the greenhouse that we saw at Wabigoon Lake. It's a greenhouse that's growing seedlings, but there are other greenhouses in other parts of the north that are growing food.

I don't have the answers to those big systemic issues, but you're raising them, and they're being raised in the context of a stopgap benefit that I don't think is designed to deal, nor is it capable of dealing, with those broader issues. That's really what this year is about: figuring out what this benefit can do and what it can't do and then working with First Nations to make the case where we need to make it.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you for that. I do agree with you about the point that Ontario Works and its discretionary benefits are not designed to help address a lot of the systemic issues. The problem that I have is that Ontario and communities have been battling with the federal government for how many decades now? We're not seeing any improvement; let's face it. In fact, my personal view of what happened with Attawapiskat is: Here we had a community that was sick and tired of putting up with deplorable, substandard, worse-than-Third World living conditions, and they stood up, and what happened? The federal government vilified them and put all the blame on them. What's really happening, even when a community does take a stand? My concern is, if we cancel these discretionary benefits—isn't having something better than nothing?

Also, something that frustrates me—you brought up the cost of food—is: What is wrong with our society and our governments when we're perfectly willing to subsidize the price of alcohol through the LCBO but we can't help people get access to food? There's something really wrong there.

I also wanted to find out about how much exactly this program was costing Ontario, because I know that it was introduced during the Ontario budget, but my understanding with the 1965 welfare agreement is that not very much of this money is actually coming from Ontario; I think the bulk of it is actually reimbursed or paid by the federal government.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You're right. You'll have to talk to the Ministry of Community and Social Services to get the chapter and verse on those costs, but what I can tell you is just in terms of the way social assistance is funded in Ontario, because you're referencing that.

There is what is called the '65 agreement, which was 1965. It's also referred to as the Indian welfare services agreement and the memorandum of agreement respecting a welfare program for Indians. It has a number of names, but in the vernacular it seems to be called the '65 agreement. In that agreement, Ontario assumes responsibility for the provision of provincial welfare in First Nations, and then the federal government reimburses Ontario for approximately 92% to 93% of eligible expenditures. The Ministry of Community and Social Services administers that IWS agreement on behalf of all the participating ministries.

Since that agreement was signed, the federal government hasn't been providing the same level of service that it agreed to in 1965. For instance, child care rates have been capped since the 1992 levels based on the per capita costs, the cost-sharing or reimbursement formula set out in the agreement, and it changes annually. Right now, that agreement covers Ontario Works; it covers the child and family services program, the child protection and child welfare prevention through MCYS; it covers the child daycare program, which is run through education; and the homemakers program through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. So there is a reimbursement that happens.

0920

One of the issues is that notion of eligible expenditures. I think that's a point of contention, but I think in terms of the actual amounts, you'll need to talk to the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

I go back to my original point that there is a need—and I hear what you're saying about how something is better than nothing. But I also think that when you have an ill-defined—and this isn't casting aspersions anywhere, but over time I think sometimes if there isn't a review of the way programs are administered, the boundaries can become blurred and it's not clear exactly what the program is for and what it's not for. When you have an ill-defined program, there's confusion, and there can be a lot of inequity that creeps in. That's one of the things that I know has concerned us. If you look across the province, there are radically different expenditures from community to community. We need to sort that out. We need to figure out why one community is spending X dollars per person and another is spending much, much less. That's one of the reasons I think it's important that we sort this out.

I also just wanted to note, there is a note that we have on a Nutrition North Canada program—and you're probably aware of that, a program that's intended to deal with the high cost of food. I'm just going to ask Laurie LeBlanc to speak to that.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** It is a federal government program that was launched in 2011, so it's relatively new. It replaces the Food Mail Program they had before. It is intended to improve access to perishable, healthy food in isolated northern communities, so it includes fresh vegetables, fruit, that kind of thing. There has been criticism of the program that the money, the subsidy, goes to the businesses and it doesn't go to the consumers. The businesses are accountable, therefore, to pass that subsidy along. There is a limited number of foods that are eligible. Fortunately, it doesn't include chips and snacks. That is not covered by a subsidy. It's really around that fresh food. There have been some protests about it around the north. It is also only eligible for communities that don't have permanent road access or rail access, for fly-in communities.

So there have been some concerns about transparency and effectiveness, and I think the federal government is obviously hearing about those protests and concerns. As the minister said, as we work with the communities, if there's something, we can pass that along to our federal counterparts as well. But there is an attempt on their part to recognize the very high costs in the very isolated communities.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The other issue—and this is an issue that is highlighted in Grassy Narrows around food security—is the issue of contamination of a food source. One of the reasons that I'm pleased that we've reconnected with the Grassy Narrows community and that ministry officials are going to be meeting with them to talk about the whole range of issues surrounding the contamination of the fish is that where there's a food



source that has been contaminated, there needs to be a realistic look at what's going to work. There was the Fish for Food program that was put in place and that was bringing frozen fish into the community. That wasn't acceptable to members of the community. The concern has been that the fish has continued to be eaten, and there's some confusion about the science in terms of what's safe and what's not safe, and we're trying to sort that out with the community. That was one of the reasons I went to Grassy Narrows, and it's obviously something that will be at the centre of the conversations with that committee that has been set up. But it speaks to the complexity of the food security issues in the north.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'm glad you raised the Nutrition North program because I wasn't aware of the program until I went up to the Far North this past January, February and March. But the program is still, in my opinion, not very effective, because what happens is, first of all, there's unequal distribution of the program in terms of the subsidy. Not all communities have equal access to the subsidy. It's based on the former—I can't remember what the program was called, the mail—

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Food Mail.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** The Food Mail program. So some communities used the Food Mail program more than other communities. My understanding was that wasn't something that the members of the community had any control over. I think it was kind of like civil servants who were able to order the food. I think teachers were one of the groups, and nurses and people like that.

The communities now—some communities are only getting I think 50 cents—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** One minute.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** —or something to that effect. But the other thing is we still have to keep in mind that even with this program—I've gone into many of the northern stores in these communities. I've looked at the price of milk and you're still looking at—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We're not there. Absolutely.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Yes. Eighteen dollars for four litres of milk. It's just—for people who are on social assistance—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But your federal counterpart in your riding is a member of the government. My hope would be that you're able to raise all of these issues. I have yet to meet your federal counterpart at any of the events or anything that I've attended, and that's neither here nor there, but the fact is that it is the federal government that needs to step up to the plate. My belief is that we need to have a rational approach to these things and obviously have to co-operate—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. We'll now move on. Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you, Chair.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** The government is now up. Mr. Zimmer, my favourite.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you for recognizing me.

I'd like to turn the discussion over to Ipperwash issues. It seems in many ways a long time ago that that issue was faced here in Ontario and all of the tragedies and the fallout from it and so on. But I think it's important in the aboriginal affairs community to keep those issues and the progress we're making on some of those sensitive issues always in the fore. I know that the inquiry made 100 recommendations. My information is that, as of today, 71 recommendations have been implemented or are continuing to be implemented by the provincial government, but there are about 24 recommendations that are currently under consideration by some, I think, seven ministries, and four of the recommendations were directed to the federal government.

Minister, can you bring us up to date on the 24 recommendations that are currently under consideration by the seven ministries?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thanks for the question. I'd like to talk a little bit about our responsibility in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs for leading the development, the coordination and the implementation of the government's response to the inquiry's report, because it's not just one ministry that is responding to the inquiry's report; it really is across government.

The Ipperwash Inquiry Priorities and Action Committee, or the IIPAC, was established to allow First Nations and the provincial ministries, led by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, to set some priorities and work together to review and address the report's recommendations. Not all of the province's efforts to address the Ipperwash recommendations fell under the IIPAC umbrella, but many of them did.

What I'd like to do is just go through the key achievements to date, because I think if we group some of these and look at where we've gotten to, we'll be able to paint a picture of what's yet left to be done.

**0930**

Some of the key achievements to this point—I've talked about this before in this session—the creation of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in June 2007. What this initiative did was signal the commitment to address issues of aboriginal peoples in Ontario. There hadn't been a stand-alone ministry. That has been the case since June 2007.

We've achieved greater input to government decision-making. The establishment of the IIPAC committee that I just spoke about in that process, along with a number of other bilateral processes with aboriginal partners, has really solidified the commitment that Ontario made with First Nation leaders to work on implementing recommendations. In turn, Ontario government and First Nations technicians are working much more closely to explore priority recommendations.

The issue of aboriginal capacity-building: In 2008, Ontario established—I've spoken about this before—the new relationship fund, the commitment of \$25 million over the first two years. That was a key recommendation of the Ipperwash inquiry report: to make a concerted investment in the capacity of First Nations. The 2010

budget committed \$60 million to the new relationship fund over the next four years, between 2010 and 2014: a base of \$15 million available annually for the fund and applications permit, multi-year funding. We actually talked about the new relationship fund process.

On the issue of government response to aboriginal protests and occupations, a response and reconciliation capacity was created in MAA in order to be able to assist the crown and aboriginal interests on specific issues. Ad hoc committees were established on an as-needed basis around emerging issues.

In February 2012, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services issued a police-aboriginal relations approach. That is an approach, a policy, that's aimed at enhancing police and aboriginal community relationships, and that approach includes existing OPP and ministry initiatives. There's a set of peacekeeping principles and current MCSCS policing guidelines, one of which being policing aboriginal occupations and protests and major incident command guidelines. Those guidelines were approved and distributed to police services.

What this is part of, from my perspective, is a culture shift around the relationship between government and First Nations via the policing relationship. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has also allocated funding for aboriginal awareness training, and that's a requirement for front-line recruits and specialized units in policing aboriginal occupations and protests. I know that sometimes initiatives like that are not seen as part of the hard response, but in order for a hard response to be successful, there needs to be the skills training and the awareness that will allow for those relationships to perhaps allow for less conflict to happen in the first place, and that's obviously a goal.

On justice reforms, the Independent Police Review Act, 2007, passed into law in May 2007—prior to the release, actually, of the Ipperwash report—and that statute amended the Police Services Act to create an independent police review director to handle public complaints against police, including complaints of misconduct involving racism and other culturally insensitive conduct. Again, that's part of the culture shift.

On First Nations policing, the Ministry of Correctional Services is continuing to work with First Nations representatives on exploring a legislative basis for First Nations policing in Ontario through the IIPAC process. The potential elements of a First Nations policing statute could include some of the key elements that are covered in the Police Services Act; for example, minimum standards for police services; an officer code of conduct; civilian oversight of police services—the equivalent of police services boards; administrative structure; and responsibility for providing local police services. That work is under way.

Some other MCSCS initiatives include the development of a ministry guideline for information exchange between the government of Ontario and the Ontario Provincial Police in order to fill what was identified as a

policy gap. There was nothing there that allowed for that information to flow.

On the public education and awareness front, I've spoken here already about the First Nation, Métis and Inuit education policy framework that has been developed in co-operation with aboriginal communities and peoples, school boards and other education stakeholders. Also, as part of that curriculum review process, aboriginal content has been integrated into the revised curriculum. I think I've said here that I think that we still have a ways to go in terms of the capacity of the education system to actually deliver that content and perhaps the need for more of that. The Ministry of Education has posted *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, which is a resource to help teachers integrate these perspectives into classroom instruction. We continue to work with the Ministry of Education on making those changes real and bringing them to life in classrooms around the province.

On land claims reform, our ministry has reformed its claims process. We've met the objective that was set in reviewing the backlog of claims submitted prior to April 1, 2008, by March 31, 2011, and we've revised the assessment process to have all new claims reviewed within three years of receipt. That brings us into compliance or into sync with the federal benchmark, which is the same, so that when new claims come forward, we would look at them and within three years determine whether they would go forward or not. I think that's accurate—deputy? Yes.

On the lands and resources, ministries across government have established a range of formal and informal co-operative processes and agreements with aboriginal communities and organizations to facilitate their involvement in resource management planning, in operational partnerships, administrative aspects of resource allocation and regulation and in accessing resources. Some examples of those are the Anishinabek/Ontario Resource Management Council, and that's through the Ministry of Natural Resources; the water power site release policy, again through the Ministry of Natural Resources, and also the forest tenure modernization initiative; the Green Energy Act initiatives, through the Ministry of Energy; the Far North Act, through the Ministry of Natural Resources; and the northern Ontario growth plan, through the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

In July 2008, the Premier announced the plan to develop a system of resource benefits-sharing with aboriginal communities. That announcement included a plan to protect the northern boreal forest under the Far North planning initiative and the mining reform act. MAA, our ministry, was in discussion with aboriginal partners regarding resource benefits-sharing; since 2008 that conversation was ongoing. There were intensive discussions in 2010-11 that focused on developing the terms for those resource revenue-sharing arrangements. Unfortunately, that process fell apart in June 2011. There was an announcement about the Métis Voyageur development fund to support the participation of Métis resources



and development opportunities, but an agreement with the First Nations was not reached, and in the spring of 2012, our ministry provided funding to the chiefs of Ontario to undertake a rollout report to help First Nations prepare for future discussions.

I think I've spoken about the need for resource revenue-sharing discussions to go forward, particularly vis-à-vis the Ring of Fire, and we are committed to that happening. We weren't able to reach an overarching agreement, but my hope is that the conversations will be ongoing, particularly vis-à-vis the Ring of Fire.

The two other areas I want to just touch on, and then I'm going to ask staff to speak about some of the recommendations that haven't been completely fulfilled—because I think that was your question, Mr. Zimmer, on the 24 recommendations. On consultation and accommodation—and some of these are a work-in-progress; a lot of them are a work-in-progress. What we've done in terms of consultation and accommodation is, we've explored and we continue to explore opportunities to work in conjunction with First Nations on the development of some really practical tools to develop training and capacity support, to facilitate consultation, as well as to create potential forums to learn more about First Nation and Métis perspectives on the duty to consult and accommodate. We're committed to doing that. We've put guidelines in place.

0940

Finally, the last area I just want to touch on is heritage and burial sites. In March of this year, our ministry and the Chiefs of Ontario cohosted the IPAC forum on burial and heritage with participation from the First Nation task force, ministry staff from 10 ministries and First Nations-invited guest experts. So we're working on that front.

I'm just going to read into the record a couple of quotes before I turn it over to staff. But I think what's important coming out of all of this work that's been done in response to the report is that culture shift that I was talking about, because I think that that is what's going to allow us to move forward. I'm going to quote a couple of remarks that weren't specifically related to the Ipperwash inquiry recommendations, but I think they speak to that change in relationship.

The first one is from Grand Chief Warren White. He made these remarks at the Wabigoon ceremony that I spoke to earlier. MPP Campbell was there with me. Grand Chief White said, "I see a willingness to work together. I see a difference in the attitude and the way Ontario does business. We hope, and we will share—we will continue to bring the issues to the forefront." That change in the way we work together I think is critical.

Gary Lipinski, who's the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, on March 4, 2011—and that comment from Grand Chief White was just this past summer, in July. This comment from Gary Lipinski is from March 4, 2011, and it's part of a letter that he wrote in support of our ministry's receipt of the United Nations Public Service Award in 2011. He writes, "The agreement honours the role the" Métis Nation of Ontario "plays in speaking

for its communities. In doing so, it provides the foundation for a new collaborative relationship between the MNO and the Ontario government. Signing this agreement was a vital step in the ongoing journey of reconciliation between the government and Métis in Ontario."

He was referring there to the Métis Nation of Ontario and the government of Ontario's framework agreement that was signed. Again, I think that that comment speaks to the change in the relationship, and much of that has to do with the changes we have made in response to the Ipperwash inquiry.

I'm just going to ask staff—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, sure.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** If it's not an appropriate question, just—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Just don't answer it?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Just pass it on and we'll go to the deputy. We were talking about the resource benefit-sharing agreement and the issues flowing out of that, and you used the expression that, unfortunately, that "process fell apart," but that there's a rollout report that's being done. I guess that's sort of the lessons learned from that process, and perhaps how to do things in the future so we don't get into one of those "it fell apart" scenarios. But it might be useful if they have any insights into lessons learned from that falling-apart process in the context of the cultural shift—that you're trying to shift the paradigm.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I wasn't in this office at that time, but from my understanding—and I'm just going to talk about this high-level and then maybe staff can speak to the specifics. But I think there was a complexity involved in trying to come up with a framework agreement across a large number of First Nations. If we look at the Métis Nation of Ontario and our ability to come to an agreement there: Because there's one organization that we were dealing with, I think that changed the dynamic. Within the broader discussion with First Nations, there were many voices. Again, there's no blame here. It's just that there wasn't a coherent vision of how this would work, and so it was difficult to engage in that discussion. As I understand it, there was a need for some more time for the First Nations side of the table to be able to do just what you're saying, come to some lessons learned and develop that vision of what was going to transpire going forward.

The reality is that fiscal situations change and there are different dynamics at play. I think that where we are now is that the discussion around resource revenue-sharing is going to be more about the individual initiatives, the Ring of Fire in particular, and the bilateral conversations that are happening between the government and the First Nations as part of that process.

I'm not going to presuppose what the lessons learned from the First Nations side are, but from our side—and you and I have spoken about this before—we have to be clear about what the parameters of the discussion are, we have to be clear what it is we're talking about and what

we're not talking about, and then scope the discussion according to those parameters.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Has that rollup report been completed now, or is that still a work in progress?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's a work in progress.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** We'll now move on to the PCs and MPP Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Good morning, Minister.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Good morning.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I hope you had a great Labour Day weekend, as I did.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But you weren't canoeing, I understand.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No, I was not canoeing. I was cycling.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay, that's good.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Using leg power, for sure.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We like active transportation.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Absolutely. It's part of the green energy; is it not?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's right.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I have a quick question for you. This year, the Ministry of Health implemented a non-increase in EMS funding in the region of Middlesex-London, and an audit by KPMG determined that this actually amounted to a funding shortfall of approximately \$400,000 for EMS services in London. I mention this because there are two First Nations communities in Middlesex-London that are eligible for land ambulance services from the region. The population of these communities, since 2007, has actually increased by 153% and—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Sorry. Can you just say that last piece? What has increased?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm sorry. The population of these two communities, since 2007, has actually increased 153% and 211% respectively. With valuable resources now being stretched thinner in the city of London, what has your response been to this issue to ensure that First Nations communities in Middlesex-London will continue to receive these EMS services?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's a very specific question about a particular area of the province. I'm going to have to get back to you on the specifics around Middlesex-London, and we will do that.

I'm going to ask staff, though, to speak generally to the relationships on health issues, because we do take part in and we have initiated a number of health and wellness strategies. The aboriginal healing and wellness strategy is something that's extremely important and is critical to our relationship on health with First Nations communities. We also have youth mental health initiatives. Again, that relationship on health is shared with the federal government, and so I'm going to ask staff to speak to that briefly.

Before I do that, Mr. Nicholls, I want to just highlight what you said about the increase in population in the two

communities. As we have this conversation, we have to remember that aboriginal children are the fastest-growing demographic in the province. One of the reasons that I believe the work of this ministry across government is so critical is that the future workforce of many parts of the province is going to be dependent on healthy aboriginal children who have been able to graduate from school and have been able to develop their skills. I think it's a little-known fact among the general public—you obviously know it because you've got communities in your riding, but I don't think the general public in Ontario realizes what an important demographic aboriginal youth are in the province.

I'm going to ask Laurie just to speak to our health initiatives.

**0950**

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Sure. Just two different streams I'll mention briefly. One is a provincial government effort. It's called the aboriginal healing and wellness strategy, and it's actually a joint program—it's really interesting—between the Ontario government, the First Nations and aboriginal organizations. A number of ministries are involved in that: the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Children and Youth Services, Ontario Women's Directorate and MAA as well, and that strategy really looks to combine the traditional and mainstream programs to help improve aboriginal health.

We look at programs and services available to aboriginal people on-reserve and in urban and rural communities—that's an important point; community wellness programs; aboriginal Healthy Babies; counselling to address mental and emotional issues; crisis intervention; healing lodge; health care; health promotion; education; as well as shelter and safe houses for women escaping domestic violence and their children—and the minister did refer earlier to that being a particular challenge; prenatal and postnatal care; and substance abuse treatment centres. This strategy has been around for a while; it has been very successful in some of its outcomes.

The other thing, though, more broadly is a relationship and some work that we're doing with First Nations communities and aboriginal organizations. The Ontario Ministry of Health is the lead; our ministry is involved with the federal government and it's a tripartite committee, and sometimes committees—it's a committee that actually speaks truth to power. Is that the right term? We look at the issues that are facing the communities at the time to try to be more collaborative and coordinated in our response. Prescription drug abuse is a good example of the kind of thing that we're dealing with.

So we really do try to work closely with federal officials, with aboriginal leadership and communities to try to make the most that we can of the various resources that go into aboriginal communities.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The other area that we've made investment in, as I said, is aboriginal children and youth mental health. As part of the overarching provincial mental health strategy, \$9.2 million has been ear-



marked for aboriginal-specific mental health and addiction initiatives. So the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is working with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to develop a regional allocation strategy to determine where the new aboriginal mental health workers will be deployed because there is new human resource available for these issues.

I guess the final thing I would say is that the aboriginal health initiatives are both on- and off-reserve. So part of the urban aboriginal reality is that friendship centres are often a place where resources are available; so the Healthy Babies program, for example, in a number of the friendship centres that I visited—that's where that program is delivered. On-reserve there's a different model; there will be, often, a health centre that again will be funded provincially and federally. So that raises the issue of coordination of all of those programs, and I think that's some of the ongoing work that we have to do to make sure that the dollars and the human resources are going where they need to go and that issues like addiction and mental health are part of a holistic approach to health.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, I appreciate that. Thank you, Minister. The dollars are being stretched, and they have to be stretched right now.

Have you had an opportunity to discuss the thinning of the resources—financial resources, that is—with the Minister of Health to make her aware of the fact that there are two aboriginal communities in the London-Middlesex area—which by the way is not my riding; I'm Chatham-Kent-Essex, but I do have one in my riding. But we were aware of the fact that these two communities were eligible for land ambulance services. We just had a concern, and I'm wondering if you had had an opportunity to at least raise that concern with the minister so that these two communities wouldn't be—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We'll certainly cycle back to the Ministry of Health to get more information on that. But as I say, our focus has very much been on making sure that the right services are available.

When I travelled to Webequie a number of months ago—and I think I mentioned this in our conversation about the Ring of Fire earlier—one of the things that we talked about was the availability of addiction prevention and addiction treatment resources. That was related to the conversation about people being ready to take part in training, being able to take part in the economic initiatives. It's very important that we get that part of the health equation right.

I have had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Health and the expert group that she brought together to look at addiction and mental health resources in First Nations communities. I know that she's engaged in that activity and that she's watching very closely the healing and wellness strategy to see where there need to be refinements and so on.

We'll get back to you on the land ambulance.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much. Go ahead, Laurie.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Can I just add that the aboriginal healing and wellness strategy, just to emphasize the commitment, is a \$38-million program which provides more than 460 community-based aboriginal health and healing programs? It is something that is quite significant and making an impact.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you; I appreciate that. I'll look forward to your response back.

I'm going to turn this over to my colleague Mr. Leone.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Can I just be clear? It's London-Middlesex; it's not your riding. It's not Chatham-Kent.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No. There may be others, but specifically the question was pertaining to London-Middlesex and the two communities in that area.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I apologize. I missed that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That's all right.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's good. Okay, thanks.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thanks, Minister. I noticed in your answer to one of the questions by the member for Kenora-Rainy River that you encouraged her to have a discussion with her federal counterpart with respect to aboriginal issues. My question is: How often do you, in fact, dialogue with the federal government in terms of aboriginal issues in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Our staff are in regular—

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Weekly.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. I was going to say "every other day." But there's a lot of interaction between the ministries. I have reached out on a couple of occasions to have a conversation with Minister Duncan, and certainly my staff and his staff talk. There's frequent interaction.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** If you could provide us some indication of the nature of the discussions; what types of issues are you discussing when you're interacting—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** All the issues that we've talked about here; all of the places where the provincial responsibilities and the federal responsibilities intersect. That ranges from housing to—

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Education.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes; housing, education. In terms of the land claims, there's a much more formal interaction. It may be helpful for staff to speak to that, but we certainly talk about a range of social issues.

The other reality is that there is a standing invitation for Minister Duncan to join, meet with, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group from across the country. It's relatively disturbing to me that he hasn't taken us up on that. I've only been the minister since last October, but certainly my predecessors—the federal government didn't take part, hasn't taken part in that national conversation, and I think that it would be very helpful if that were to happen.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Does the province of Ontario have any official position on self-government?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Sorry, I missed that question.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Does the government of Ontario have an official position on self-government?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We're working in specific areas, and I think I raised the discussion that we're having—the bilateral conversation that we're having with the Union of Ontario Indians, for example, on self-government in education. Certainly there are various conversations around the province. I attended a session in Kashechewan, when I think the Mushkegowuk Council—is that right? Yes—was having a session on self-government. I availed myself of the opportunity to listen and take part.

We're interested in being part of processes that facilitate good, sustainable, healthy communities wherever that can take place, but I think it's been more sector-by-sector.

I'm going to ask staff to speak to other—I don't think we've got any formal policy or agreement on self-government at this point.

1000

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** We don't have one overarching policy. As the minister said, we're working with the federal government in terms of some discussions going on around self-government, in education—I know there's been an interest in child welfare and social services as well, so very specific areas.

I would, if I can, just add to the question about a relationship with the federal government, which of course happens at the political level, and then staff also have an ongoing regular working relationship. We do, not just in our Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, but in a range of ministries—education, community and social services—also work with the federal government specific to some aboriginal issues.

As a side note, I've been asked to sit down tomorrow with the Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and he brings in all of his senior executive from across the country. They're focusing on Ontario region to hear some of the things going on in Ontario region federally, and they want to hear the perspectives from the deputy minister, from a staff perspective as well as some First Nations perspective about things that the federal government can do to help address some of the challenges.

So, at the staff level, there's quite a bit of dialogue that goes on and information-sharing.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So Ontario regularly provides their position and opinion on matters like self-government, issues relating to the Indian Act. That's part of the normal conversation of what goes on between—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's one part of the conversation, but I think what is more germane to us is the ongoing challenge that is faced by aboriginal people in the province. Sure, if the discussion of jurisdiction or self-government or those broad issues arise, then we will take part in that conversation. But what's critical to us is that we have open lines of communication to deal with issues as they arise.

When the issue in Attawapiskat arose and I was newly appointed minister, our ministry was working with the

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services on mobilizing Emergency Management Ontario and trying to gauge when it would be that EMO would go to Attawapiskat. It was very important that I call the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs federally and say, "Look, we're concerned. We think that something needs to happen here. When are your people going to go to Attawapiskat?" That's the conversation that I had with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs federally. I will continue to do that, Mr. Leone. I'm not somebody who's going to point a finger and say, "The federal government isn't living up to its responsibility." What I'm saying is, there are joint responsibilities. There are three-way responsibilities; we talk about First Nations, federal and provincial. The only way that we're going to have any successful, sustainable future in Ontario for aboriginal people is for all orders of government, including First Nations and aboriginal organizations, to work together.

Are there frictions and are there concerns that I hold politically? Absolutely. But that's not the fundamental point. The point for me is, how do we work together, how do we make sure that everybody's picking up the pieces that they need to pick up and that we're facilitating each other's best process?

If I go back to the discretionary benefits, part of that for me is, how do we sort out who's responsible for what in that particular area?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Certainly, there's a great deal of debate with respect to self-government and empowering First Nations to confront the issues that they're facing. Certainly, other provinces have decided to go about different ways of addressing that concern, British Columbia being one of the foremost, I think, with respect to that. Has the ministry analyzed a comparative analysis of other provinces and their dealings with issues relating to aboriginal affairs? How do we feel we're shaping up against other provinces?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to ask Doug Carr—his name is not David. I'm going to ask Doug Carr to speak to your question.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** One minute, Mr. Carr.

**Mr. Doug Carr:** Okay. In British Columbia, for example, where self-government is probably the most, if you will, ripe and extensive, and also in Quebec, it has been done in the context of their treaty negotiations. It has been in the context of land claim discussions, if you will. The federal government has made a condition of reaching treaties that self-government agreements also be reached so that First Nations then come out from under the Indian Act and all those federal oversight responsibilities. That's why, in Quebec and British Columbia, you see the most evolved approach to self-government.

In Ontario, as you know, we're only negotiating the one treaty, the Algonquin treaty and the Algonquin matter, so self-government hasn't become as pressing an issue and hasn't become as developed here. As the deputy said, it's kind of focused issue by issue, education being probably the one that most First Nations are expressing an interest in at the present moment.



**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you, Mr. Carr. We'll now be moving on.

I'll remind the committee that we have about seven or eight minutes left. Wherever we end up, we will start again with the third party.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Actually, if you could stay at the table, I have a few more questions.

Are you saying that those discussions can primarily only occur or would only occur in the context of treaty negotiations?

**Mr. Doug Carr:** No. I think that the government doesn't have a formal position on self-government, Ms. Campbell. I think that what the government up to now has been interested in is outcomes: Where would a self-government discussion actually make a difference in terms of the quality of life for First Nation peoples or Métis people? To date, in Ontario, education has probably been the area where First Nations have told us that we could make the biggest difference if self-government were to be brought in. As well, they've talked about child welfare as perhaps the next biggest area that we've heard about.

I think that the government hasn't taken a position yet or nay, but we haven't been, if you will, pushed by Canada to do it in the context of treaty-making, as has happened in a couple of other provinces.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Our predisposition, if you look at those conversations on education and on child welfare—and I won't speak for Minister Hoskins, but I know that the issues of customary care and the issues of self-government around education are certainly issues that we want to explore and we are exploring, and we're predisposed to see those as potentially very good things. Even though there's no formal policy, there's certainly no negative judgment or any resistance to having those conversations. In fact, we want to have those conversations.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** So what is the official government position on creating a Haida-like agreement? That has been raised by a number of communities in my area: that they didn't give away their rights to the land; that in the treaties they actually state that there should be sharing and co-management.

**Mr. Doug Carr:** The only area right now where we have a formal assertion from a group of First Nations is the Algonquin nations, who have said to us that we have not negotiated the treaty that we should have negotiated with them. Over a 22-year period, we've been engaged with Canada and the Algonquin nations, trying to find that treaty.

I think the government has no other assertion on the table that a new treaty needs to be negotiated. Across the spectrum of land claims that we do have in the province, the 60-odd claims we're working on, the question has been about living up to existing treaties. That's why we really haven't been confronted, in the treaty context, with a broad range of assertions that we need to negotiate self-government as part of creating these new treaties.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** So, despite the new relationship, this government is only interested in living up to its

current obligations and not looking at doing anything that would be more equitable?

**1010**

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No, I don't think that's true. In fact, I think I just said, in answer to your earlier question, that we are predisposed to look for new arrangements. When I talk about education, and I use the Union of Ontario Indians as an example—the bilateral conversation that's going on there—I think we very much want to find new models, and we want to work with First Nations. That new model in that instance would be a self-governance model of education. So I think it's absolutely inaccurate to say that we're not interested in looking at change in that area.

I think what Doug is saying is that there aren't particular rights issues that have been raised with us, so we're in a different situation than some of the other jurisdictions in the country. But where those conversations come up, where there is interest, where there's an engagement, we're very much interested in following up and being part of development of new models.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** What's the process, then? As I mentioned, I have a number of communities in my area who have expressed interest time and time again about creating a Haida-like agreement. How should they pursue that?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Doug?

**Mr. Doug Carr:** We have a formal process for addressing land claim assertions, and that involves First Nations pulling together a submission in which they document carefully the nature of the claim that they're making. Then they have to bring forward all the historical evidence that relates to that claim that they're bringing. We need to see maps and we need to see the basis of the assertions in terms of government documents and so on that would allow us to be able to assess that claim. They can submit that claim to the ministry and then we'll review it. As the minister said in response to an earlier question, our commitment is that we'll review those and provide answers within a three-year period.

If we were to receive an assertion from Treaty 3 First Nation, say, in your riding, then we would look at it and we put it through our process.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But the other part is that even before that, if there are communities that you're aware of who are interested in having a conversation or asking us about what that process would look like, we have staff and people who would be happy to have that conversation with them.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Do I still have a couple of minutes left?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** You have a couple of minutes left.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Okay. So I wanted to fire off a few quick questions about the new relationship fund. Specifically, I'm wondering if I could get a breakdown of the money that has been spent on the new relationship fund. How much has been spent since 2010, to which community, and for which process or project?

I'm also wondering if other ministries are aware of the existence of this fund, and what kind of promotion has been done.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We can get you all those details. I'm just going to ask David de Launay to come up and speak to that.

**Mr. David de Launay:** I'm just looking for my detailed note on the numbers.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** David, what is your title?

**Mr. David de Launay:** Assistant deputy minister of aboriginal relations and ministry partnerships.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mr. David de Launay:** What I can tell you is that virtually all the First Nations in the province have core funding through the new relationship fund, which generally provides either a staff person or support for their involvement in consultation processes, which could be background research or other activities. Virtually every First Nation has that arrangement through the new relationship fund.

We refer to the second part of the fund as enhanced funding, which First Nations or organizations apply for, and they could be aboriginal organizations as well. We do provide, on the core funding, funding to the Métis as well as First Nations. In the enhanced funding, we have fairly strict criteria by which we fund projects, because it's always oversubscribed.

That's the short story. We can get you the exact details of everything.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you. In terms of eligibility, would a First Nation community be eligible if they are just negotiating with the provincial government, or does industry have to be involved?

**Mr. David de Launay:** No. As I say, virtually every First Nation has core funding. They're not all necessarily involved with the provincial government or proponents, but most of them are, in one way or another.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think I gave these numbers earlier. There are 465 projects in 135 First Nations. To David's point: Virtually every First Nation has got funding—33 Métis communities and 22 aboriginal organizations.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you. I appreciate that. I'm looking for specific numbers, though: per community and which project.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, and we're going to have to get back to you on that.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I appreciate that.

Specifically with regard to Shoal Lake 39, I know that they've been trying to conduct some consultation with—I should back that up. Shoal Lake 39 is trying to get the provincial government—various ministries—to consult with them about the twinning of the highway around Kenora. This is a project, if you'll remember, that was announced prior to any consultation, and it kind of brings back to the question that my colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane asked: At what point does the formal

consultation begin? Because this project was announced; plans were drawn up by the MTO—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** One minute.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** —and then there was the realization that, "Whoops, we should have consulted with the community."

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs at the time, when I was Minister of Transportation—we travelled to Shoal Lake 39. We met with the community, and there was an immediate engagement by the assistant deputy ministers with the community on a number of issues, including training possibilities for people in the community. I know that Chief Mandamin has raised this issue a number of times, and he raised it at a gathering in the spring. In fact, there was a meeting happening immediately after that meeting. The engagement continues.

It certainly was my desire that there would be opportunities for the community, because that's one of the issues that was raised. It wasn't just about the twinning of the road and the corridor that the road was going to follow; it was also about: What were the opportunities for the people in the community to have jobs, to be part of the project?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay. When we come back, maybe I can add to that.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes. Actually, the third party will start with 10 minutes this afternoon.

I hope my performance met with your approval, Mr. Zimmer.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Surprisingly, yes, it did.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay; that's good.

We're now recessed until 3:45 this afternoon. Thank you.

*The committee recessed from 1017 to 1545.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Good afternoon, committee members. We are here to resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, vote 2001. When the committee recessed this morning, the third party had 10 minutes left of its 20-minute rotation. Then we'll go to the government for their 20 minutes, and after that we'll have our last round of 10-minute rotations. I now recognize the third party.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Chair. This morning before the break, I asked the minister, and the minister stated that her ministry undertook immediate engagement with Shoal Lake 39 over the proposed highway twinning. My questions are: If this was the case, in the most recent meeting where we met on August 1 in the community, why did the MTO already have the plans drawn up, and why are they at the point where they have to go back to the drawing board because they're saying that proper consultation had not occurred?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to ask staff to go over the meetings that have taken place with Shoal Lake 39. Again, I haven't been part of those most recent



conversations, but I know that at the point that we began the discussion, there was a potential corridor that had been laid out. We looked at the map with the community and we saw where the traditional keeper of the map—I can't remember the woman's name, but she had held on to that agreement for her whole lifetime, really, and we looked at where the traditional territory touched the place where MTO had drafted a potential corridor. That was one of the issues that was going to be discussed. I'm going to ask Laurie LeBlanc to speak to that.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** Thanks. I'll just go back a little bit in the history of the meetings that took place in Shoal Lake. Minister Wynne, when she was Minister of Transportation, and Minister Bentley from Aboriginal Affairs met with the First Nation back in 2010. Since that time, there has been a number of—I would say progress. Back in October 2011, Northern Development and Mines officials were talking to the First Nation about consultation protocols dealing with some of the staking issues. But really what's happened—and I'll skip through some of the history here to say that—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There were meetings in November.

**Ms. Laurie LeBlanc:** There were meetings in November and December and in January 2012. What I really want to get to is, starting this past February, it really did ramp up quite a bit in terms of our discussions with them. On February 3, 2012, on behalf of the ministries of MNR, MNDM, MTO and MOE, the ADM from Aboriginal Affairs participated at a meeting at the First Nation to discuss the impasse, and this was the impasse around the Highway 17 four-laning. At that point, there was a decision made that there should be a retention of a mediator to begin the conversations with the First Nation about some of their overarching concerns. Again, in February, later in the month, the ADM conducted a follow-up meeting with Shoal Lake.

Following a meeting that took place in March—and this time it was with the ADMs of five ministries who went to Shoal Lake to have a conversation, and the First Nation decided to end the blockage. They wanted to consider, at that time, our proposal to bring in a mediator. At the time, the First Nation indicated that its preference was to have another session before they went ahead to get a mediator, and that actually took place in April, where MAA and MNR visited the community and met with the chiefs in council. At that point, there was some discussion about potentially some erecting of toll booths over the course of the summer. They decided to work together, at the request of the chief, with the First Nation, MAA and the community to develop the terms of reference for a potential facilitator. That took place in early summer. The First Nation provided a first draft of the terms of reference in June, and we've been having discussions back and forth for the last month or so. I know this is very long-winded, but just to again say that in August the MTO ADM went up to the community.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Yes, I was at that meeting. I do thank you for that summary. I guess the issue that I have

and the issue that the community has brought forward to me is that, yes, there have been meetings, but there haven't been productive meetings. What they have told me is that they will have different mid-level bureaucrats who will show up to various meetings. It's not the government-to-government relationship that they want and that they should expect, because it's in the treaty that there should be a government-to-government relationship. At this point—and it's really unfortunate, the community and the chief have taken the position that they want the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to completely stay away from the community, because meeting after meeting, they're saying that nothing has happened. They want to deal with the Premier directly on this issue, and they did say that treaty partners shouldn't be making announcements without talking to the First Nation first. I guess it also sort of begs the question that if there was a genuine spirit of negotiation and consultation, and if the community was or is seen as an equal partner, why then did the MTO sign a 12-year contract with an Australian company in the midst of this consultation?

1550

I'm not sure if that happened when you were the minister of MTO—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** —or if that has happened since.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have no idea who MTO signed a contract with on that particular—if it's on that particular project. I don't know if it's on that project or if it's on another project. I have no idea.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** It's for that stretch of highway.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But what I do know is that in my very early conversations with Chief Mandamin, and I have reiterated this since, we made it clear that we are absolutely engaged in this conversation, that my agents, in the sense that the ministry is there—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. The assistant deputy ministers are speaking with them. I can't be at every meeting; that's just not logistically possible. But we are absolutely engaged as a government with the First Nation.

It seems to me, in the telling of the story about the meetings that have happened, that there has been progress. If the conversation has gotten to priority issues and development of an action plan, it seems to me that that is huge progress from the first meeting that I had with them in May 2010. So I guess I would gauge that movement as being positive movement.

My hope would be—and I guess this is another point from my perspective. As the local member, you are very aware of how government works, and I really do see the role of local MPPs, regardless of political stripe, as facilitating communities in getting their needs met. Sometimes that means that taking an oppositional stance to government is helpful and you can push, and I totally get that that's your job. But sometimes, when there are these complex issues that are multi-layered and are not

straightforward, no matter what your party stripe is, I think it would be wonderful if you and I could have conversations when necessary to help advance this situation—

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** And I certainly appreciate that, but—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:**—because I can tell you, Ms. Campbell, that we've been doing everything we can to bring this issue to the place where the community gets support in terms of training and the road can be twinned, because we believe that will be in the best interests of all.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I can appreciate that's your view.

My issue is that what we're seeing time and time again, despite the fancy rhetoric that we've heard earlier today and in all the government documentation—we have a government that day after day, time after time, has continued to operate not in good faith, has continued to make decisions without consulting communities, and this highway twinning is a prime example of that. This twinning was announced. You've got everybody's expectations up in Kenora. People are getting upset. People are looking at the First Nation. They're wondering why the First Nation is stalling development when, in actuality, the government has gone along on their path for the last couple of years. They have drawn up plans. I saw the plans.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay. So let me—

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** They incurred a tremendous amount of expense—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Okay.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'm not finished, please. And the other thing is that I know you say that it's not possible for you to attend every single meeting, but I would like to see the case where we have mid-level bureaucrats who go to some kind of—you know, I'm not likening First Nations communities to foreign governments, but if it is a government-to-government relationship, you don't send a mid-level bureaucrat; you go and personally negotiate with—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, can I answer? Because I think we're going to run out of time here. I just want to say that in terms of making sure that a project goes ahead, the mid-level bureaucrats—you're using that term in a disparaging way, which I think is not fair, because the people with the knowledge are the people who are being sent. The people with the knowledge are the people who are being sent to have this conversation.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** They can't make decisions.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The people with the understanding of how the project—and the decisions get made by the government. That information comes back. But the reality is that the complex and technical issues that have to be discussed vis-à-vis building a road and the mapping and looking at the issues involved, that has to be people who have the knowledge, and that's how government works.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. We'll now move on to the government. You have 20 minutes.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Point of order.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Yes, I don't want to take up your time, but I'm curious as to the rationale of why we're not going to have Minister Murray in for the next round or rotation. If you could provide a rationale—because we're going to be done here in less than an hour, so I just wondered if there was a public reason for not having him in today.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** I wouldn't be privy to that decision, Mr. Leone. I'm sure the clerk will have an answer for that.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quioic Lim):** We did tentatively schedule Minister Murray for tomorrow because we weren't sure how the timing was going to go for today, when it was going to finish. I did inform Mr. Prue last week just to let him know, to make sure. It is fine with him. He said that that's okay, because we had already scheduled them for tomorrow.

Sometimes we don't know when routine proceedings will end, and we didn't know when it was going to finish for today.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay. I just wanted to have it on record.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Mr. Zimmer.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you. In fairness to you, Minister, take some of my time if you want to continue with your answer and comments to the last question, because it was an aggressive question and I think it's something you probably want to respond to.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Zimmer, I'll determine whether it was aggressive or not to the point where it needs to be rectified, okay? You don't have to give up any of your time for the third party.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you. I don't have to, but Minister, I'd be interested if you would continue with your response to Ms. Campbell's question.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I guess the only other thing I would say is we have documentation of the letters that have gone back and forth dealing with this issue; I know, having been the Minister of Transportation at the time. The announcement was made by the federal government and the provincial government, so it was a joint project that was announced before I was the Minister of Transportation, and then there is a long history of notifications for public information centres, the preliminary route designs, the planning sessions. Throughout 2009-10, there were—and I can provide this list for the member—opportunities for input by the community. That is how routes are planned; that's how the Ministry of Transportation does its business.

The reality is that the expertise rests with the bureaucrats and that the minister is engaged in, whether preliminary conversations or at intervals—and I had said to the chief that I was open to having further conversations with him, and we have had an opportunity to speak at other meetings, but that the ongoing day-to-day work was going to be done by bureaucrats, and that was a much



more efficient way of doing it, because I'm neither a planner nor a civil engineer. So those conversations need to happen.

The other thing is that from my perspective, this isn't about fancy rhetoric. It was about me getting on a plane with Minister Bentley, at the time, going to the community to look at what the concerns were, to see the road, to see where the challenges were and to hear from the community. Some of it was about the actual location of the road, but some of it was about the economic development of the community, and that's where the training piece came in. That's where the concern about young people and people in the community having work was part of the discussion. That's been why a number of ministries have been engaged in this conversation, including, I believe, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, because that was part of the vision of how this project might benefit the community.

So, the opposite of fancy rhetoric: What we have wanted is for this project to move ahead in a way that was going to be good for the First Nation community. Thank you for that time to clear that up.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** A question about land claims treaties: Here's a question I get from constituents sometimes, because they read in the paper on a regular basis that a land claims treaty has popped up here and popped up thereof in Ontario. There's a sense among some constituents that with all treaty land claims, just by virtue of the fact that someone has made them, we're into a complex negotiation and here we go again on a never-ending land claim.

1600

Can you give me some idea of the process of how the ministry reacts to a land claim? I rather expect that there must be some criteria or some way of looking at them, because on the surface, some of them may be very serious and very realistic land claims and others might be less so. How does the ministry initially assess a land claim, and then how do they decide what track to put it on—a fast track, a slow track? How does the whole process work?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you for that question. I'm going to frame the answer to this question and then I'm going to ask Doug Carr to answer it. When you hear him speak about this, you'll understand the depth his knowledge and you'll understand why you want him to answer this question and not me. Again, that is how government works at its best.

I want to frame the answer by posing four separate questions. The first one is what are the benefits of negotiating land claims—benefits to all Ontarians and to First Nations? The second question: Why does Ontario engage in land claims? What is our obligation, and why do we get involved? The third question is what are the principles that guide our negotiators? I think that starts to get at the meat of what you're asking, Mr. Zimmer. The fourth one, which I think is germane to the public perception, is why do land claim settlements take so long? I'm going to ask Doug Carr to speak to those issues.

**Mr. Doug Carr:** Thank you, Minister. Let's start with what the courts have found since 1973 in the Calder decision, which is a Supreme Court of Canada decision that aboriginal people have legal rights in land across this country. The land claim process is really a way of responding to legal obligations that governments have—governments of Canada and Ontario—to ensure that those land rights are respected in the way that governments have dealt with land and natural resource matters over many years.

The land claim process allows us to meet our legal obligations to aboriginal people in land and resources. It also provides an opportunity for First Nations, where they have rights that haven't been addressed, to be able to discuss with the government ways that those rights can be met in a fashion that allows that community to grow and become stronger and more self-sufficient. Stronger aboriginal communities contribute to a stronger, broader economy and a stronger Ontario. So the land claim process provides the flexibility you wouldn't have, say, in litigation to determine those outcomes that are going to work for an individual community as well as for a broader region in Ontario.

The land claims process as well, I think we'd say, does address some of the times when there is uncertainty. First Nations can make assertions about land or resources and their rights that are not being met, and sometimes that can cause challenges for the private sector in terms of knowing what to do, or the government, whether they can dispose of a certain kind of land or whether we can allow for permits or licences for crown land to be made available to the private sector. Through the land claim process you can achieve the level of certainty that then allows crown land to be used to its maximum benefit and lands that become part of the First Nation to be used for their maximum benefit.

Really, it's about First Nations sufficiency, it's about justice and legal obligations, and it's about economic development for First Nations as well as the broader aboriginal communities that are involved in the claims.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And in terms of the length of time, Doug, and why it takes so long?

**Mr. Doug Carr:** Land claims do generally take an awfully long time to negotiate, and I think there are three broad reasons for this. The first one has to do with the nature of First Nations themselves. Particularly for First Nations, as well as for Métis people, the connection to land is so profound that it's really part of the identity of that community. So when they're talking about a land claim, they're not talking in a way that you would in a commercial sense, about whether this parcel of land should be part of the reserve. They're really talking about their identity and who they are, whether that land is something that is theirs for their exclusive use and benefit; and whether they have a sufficiently good relationship with the crown governments, be it the federal government or the provincial government, that they feel that their grievances over time have been addressed.

The land claim process becomes a focus for the community and its identity. Consequently, it can take a long

time for an aboriginal community to look at the propositions that are put forward by the government to negotiate. In the end, there has to be a referendum by all the members of the community on whether they're prepared to accept the settlement that's offered by the federal and provincial governments.

In accepting those settlements that are offered, the community is really making a decision about whether they're going to change and transform their relationship with the crown government and with the surrounding communities, give up that grievance and kind of change from, if you will, looking at their grievance in the past to looking forward to economic development and community development. That's a real change for communities and their identity, and it requires an awful lot of thought and political work within First Nations to be able to make those decisions. That can take quite a bit of time. That's one thing.

The second thing is that the crown itself, the Ontario government—when crown land is an issue, things always take an awful lot longer, because we're doing our due diligence. It's a public resource, and we want to take the time to make sure that we fully understand the implications of making land available in a land claim settlement. We may have a legal obligation to provide certain land, but how we provide that land, which land it is and under what conditions it's provided are fundamental aspects of the land claim process. You end up, ideally, with a First Nation that gets its due; its rights are addressed and its grievances addressed, but at the same time, we have a very careful accounting for that crown resource, that belongs to all the people of Ontario, when it's contributed as part of the land claim settlement.

We have a very rigorous process that we have to go through, which is capped by a public environmental assessment process and notice and so on, that makes sure that the crown resource is being used to the maximum benefit here.

I think the third reason is a more frustrating reason, but I think it needs to be said, to be honest, and that is that you have not only the First Nation and the government of Ontario, but you have the federal government involved in almost all land claim situations. Each one has its own processes and its own rules and its own policies that it wants to follow. Sometimes, adding a third party to a discussion doesn't increase the complexity by double; it maybe increases it by fourfold. So it can take a long time. Ontario's processes and interests aren't the same as the federal government's. We do our best to be as efficient and effective and synchronize with them as much as we can, but that's unfortunately sort of a fact of life in the land claim process.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** So can I ask sort of a hypothetical, just by example? An aboriginal community shows up at your office to present a land claim. This may be an over-simplistic question, but what sort of indicia do you look at on the claim as they have presented it, before the ministry decides to accept the claim or decides, "No, that's not a claim that we're going to accept"? What are the indicia that you look at?

**Mr. Doug Carr:** Okay. We're essentially looking at three kinds of things. The first thing is the facts: What's the historical story? We require a First Nation to come and tell us what they think happened, what the story was that led to the grievance. They need to be very clear about all the events and provide as much evidence as they can for each element in that historical story.

Twenty years ago, when I started in this business, that could come in three or four banker's boxes. Today, it comes on a CD, and it will have sometimes over 1,000 documents that pertain to the background: What's the nature of the grievance, and what's the evidence that leads up to supporting the First Nation's story as to why this is a grievance?

That's the first part. What really probably takes the longest time is going through that material and trying to ground-truth it. Sometimes we hire our own researcher to do some research. Sometimes we can look at it in-house, if it's less complex, and make an assessment as to whether we feel that it's very strong historical evidence.

1610

Sometimes, of course, we talk to our federal colleagues, because they also have their information and their historical research. We're ideally trying to be on the same page with respect to what the facts are. So that's the first part: What are the facts?

The second part is that we do a legal assessment based on those facts of: Does the province of Ontario have any legal outstanding obligations with respect to the facts that are out here? If we do, does that match the assertion, because it might well turn out that the First Nation asserts X, Y and Z, and we look at it and we might say, "Yes, we do have actually some obligations here," but we might think our obligations are A, B and C. So we do this careful assessment of what our legal situation is, based on the facts, and compare that to the assertion.

The third thing we look at is the impact of negotiating the claim. We want to make sure that we're negotiating claims where we've got a reasonable chance of getting a settlement that's going to address the grievances of the First Nation but is also going to be an effective use of the crown land and is going to involve dealing with third parties, if you will—non-aboriginal people, the general public that might be affected by the claim. Before we agree to accept a claim, we might look long and hard about what we think the impacts will be on non-aboriginal people. That way, when we give an answer to the First Nation about whether we're going to accept the claim for negotiation, we might accept it with some conditions that would help ensure that we don't create unfairness or new injustices in trying to address the First Nations' historic injustice.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Doug, can I just add to that, because having said all of that in terms of the upfront process—once the decision is made on whether you're going to go forward, having discovered the facts and so on and measured the impact, there are some principles that guide you and guide our negotiators at each stage: some things about private property—we



negotiate a claim when there's a clear legal obligation to the First Nation; I think you've touched on that; the principle that Ontario will not expropriate private property to achieve a settlement, although private property may be acquired on a willing seller/willing buyer basis at fair market value; and then extensive public consultation is always part of the process. I think you touched on this as well: existing uses of crown land are taken into consideration, and every effort is made to minimize the impact. Are there other principles?

**Mr. Doug Carr:** Yes. I think the other principles are really more process-related; that we try to always, if we can, coordinate with the federal government, so there's nothing like having either non-aboriginal people who are affected or the First Nation whipsawed between the two governments. So we try very hard to decide upfront what the two roles are of the governments so that helps make a more fair process for everyone.

I think that a very important thing as well that we have to have come out of land claims is that there has to be finality and certainty at the end. So you want to leave a better relationship between the First Nation and their neighbours as well as the First Nation and the crown, the provincial government and the federal government, but we also need finality so that we know that the assertion is addressed, and then the relationship can move on in a more positive fashion.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** And that speaks to why it takes time, because if you want it not to be a divisive process, you need to take the time that it requires.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** This question is always fascinating. I've seen some of these claims come through. An argument will be built starting with—and I'm just making this up—the such-and-such treaty signed in 1793 and 1767 and then something happened in 1810 and 1812 and so on. So when they present the historical facts, how does one go about checking historical facts—who said what to whom and what undertakings were given in 1811 and 1797? How does that develop? I just find that a fascinating and complex piece.

**Mr. Doug Carr:** It really relies on three different kinds of things. First of all, there's a very extensive record in the federal archives. The federal government has, of course, not only their archives since 1867 but also the archives of the imperial governments that occurred in various forms, as you mentioned, back to the 1700s. So there is a fairly extensive federal archive that you can go and check some of these things with. That's the first thing.

The second thing is that the more claims we settle, the more we develop a common understanding between ourselves and the federal government, and also often the First Nations, of what actually happened at certain key conferences. For instance, in 1913 there was a critical conference between Canada and Ontario, who were trying to decide what they were going to do about some real problems in creating reserves in Treaty 3. We used to fight about that 20 years ago when I started in that business. We fought viciously about what was the mean-

ing of the 1913 conference. Today we all pretty much agree on the meaning of that conference by working at the various claims and the historical research over time. So it's a growing body of consensus information, if you will. Even though it happened a long time ago—there may be some element of doubt—we all sort of agree, on the balance of probability, these sorts of things happen. That's the second thing.

The third thing, of course, is oral testimony. The courts have recognized a legitimacy, within the courts, for oral testimony that often comes from the First Nation side. So we will listen to elders and listen to their testimony and assess that against what existing written records we have, and it often very much enriches and enlightens the written record in ways that are quite surprising that you might not have thought of if you hadn't actually heard the oral testimony.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Just to wrap that piece up—and thank you again for the question—none of this is done in a vacuum; it's not done in isolation. It's done in the context of the municipalities and in the context of the economic environment of the region of the communities that are putting forth the land claim—so as Doug said, leave it better than we found it.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you, Minister. We'll now move on to the official opposition. Mr. Ouellette.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Minister, for coming forward. A couple of things: Essentially the Canada Act of 1982 recognizes three specific groups, which would be the Inuit, the First Nations and the Métis. It also establishes that predominantly, treaty rights supersede provincial law.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, I heard you say that on a radio show, actually.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Imagine that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You said that treaty rights supersede all provincial law, which I think is questionable. But anyway, go ahead.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Some of the questions are that when you're dealing with this, as mentioned earlier on, it's dealing with the negotiation—the third party impact is considered when this negotiation takes place and how complex the process is. When you're dealing with the Algonquin land claim, what is the impact going to be regarding the establishment of Métis communities in that area?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, I'm going to ask Doug to come forward, because he has been very close to that negotiation. Doug, you're working hard this afternoon.

What I will say, Mr. Ouellette, is that the process whereby we're attempting to reach an agreement in principle has been a very long and extended one, which has included a lot of consultation. We can speak to those specifics, but I'll ask Doug to speak to the Métis issue at this point.

**Mr. Doug Carr:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Ouellette, the outcome of the Algonquin land claim process will be

a new treaty. A major objective in the new treaty is to try to achieve a level of certainty so that we can understand the rights that are at issue here. The whole reason we have to do a treaty is because one wasn't done in the past, so we're trying to kind of fill in the blanks, get certainty and set out the respective rights of the Algonquins as First Nations people in eastern Ontario.

The treaty will define the rights of Algonquins through all the issues under discussion, which will include land, resources, harvesting and so on and so forth. It will mean that individuals in eastern Ontario who have aboriginal ancestry—some of them may choose to identify as Algonquins if that ancestry can be traced through historical lineage to Algonquin families, or they might choose to self-identify as Métis people for their own personal reasons. Our treaty will clarify what the rights are of people who identify as Algonquins. It will not identify what the rights are of Métis people, but it will help sort out right now a class of people who maybe it's not clear whether they were going to be self-identifying over time as Algonquins or Métis. That treaty at least will straighten out that much. Then, any Métis issues that are left would have to be addressed at that point.

1620

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** When you were talking about this, you mentioned about, "for own personal reasons, may want to self-identify." Can you give the ministry's breakdown of what a classification of—how much First Nation inclusivity would you require in order to be classified as a Métis?

**Mr. Doug Carr:** The government of Ontario hasn't adopted a formal approach as to who is a Métis person and who isn't. The Métis Nation of Ontario is a major Métis group representing many Métis people across the province; they have developed a registry and criteria and so on. They have been a benchmark, I guess, for the government of Ontario, looking at who is a Métis person. But we haven't taken a formal position, and the courts have not been very clear exactly on who is a Métis person. There has been one court decision, which is called the Powley decision—

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** In Sault Ste. Marie.

**Mr. Doug Carr:** Yes. It set out a number of things in there, but it didn't boil down to blood quantum. You don't have to identify that you're 1/28<sup>th</sup>-or-something aboriginal blood; that wasn't the way the court went.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Yes. The Powley case in Sault Ste. Marie that you mentioned established quite an impact on a lot of the outdoors with the hunting community, particularly with the allocation of tags. There is some strong concern on what's taking place in the Algonquin claim in regard to the potential for moose tag allocations and/or trap line transfers in a number of areas like that, not only with the original claim but what may effectively come forward at a later date in regard to the Métis impacts.

Can you give us any breakdown on what has taken place in those particular areas, mostly in regard to tag allocation? Game management is one of the key con-

cerns, because there is a concern that the province may turn over a lot of the management to a lot of the First Nation individuals; however, the Ministry of Natural Resources will still be managing those on behalf of the First Nations. It's very unclear as to what's taking place there.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm just going to weigh in on a high level, a general level, and then Doug will speak to the specifics of that. I think that the level of detail that you are at at this point is not a level of detail that will be included in the agreement in principle, I think that's fair to say—the level of specificity. One of the reasons that we have advisory and committees of experts in place is that we've had some of those conversations; those concerns have been raised and will continue to be raised. I think that one of the issues that has surrounded this is: When are there going to be more opportunities for consultation? I've been pretty clear that the agreement in principle coming out is exactly the time when some of those very specific issues need to be raised, because the agreement in principle will be broader strokes than the level of detail that you're talking about. I'll just ask Doug to add to that.

**Mr. Doug Carr:** I'm not sure that I can all that much more to what the minister said at this point, Mr. Ouellette. I think it's fair to say that the negotiators are very aware that they're negotiating within a context. By creating a certain harvesting regime within the treaty for the Algonquins, that doesn't happen in a vacuum; that in fact there are other aboriginal people that have been making harvesting assertions and that they're saying that they have certain rights that need to be respected and factored in; and there are only so many moose in eastern Ontario that can go around. The negotiating team is very, very aware of the context in which they're negotiating this. I think, as the minister said, that the agreement in principle is intended to establish some principles that then we can have out there in the public and some proposals for a regime that's going to be fair but flexible enough so that we can see how the impacts are going to be, including those of other people making assertions that they have aboriginal or treaty rights to hunt and fish.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** We're hearing from a lot of groups. I took the ministry's consultation list and wrote each one of those, and I heard, as mentioned by the third party, about how the lack of consultation was a concern. Some groups felt they'd never been in the process in any way, shape or form. As the minister mentioned, this is going to be ongoing and you're going to hear this on a regular basis, but there's a lot of concern out there.

I would suggest that probably a more proactive approach would be to deal with one issue, whether it would be the hunting issue to start, and then release that, as opposed to releasing the entire gambit and then everybody's in a bit of a panic. That way, the groups have an opportunity to deal with those issues. I'm hearing the same about the forestry and the crown timber allocations that are going there.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Sorry, can I just respond to that? Because I hear what you're saying, that you



could go issue by issue. I get that. But there has been a long process already. There are 31 groups on the committee of external advisers. I'd be pleased to meet with the committee of external advisers, and I have said that to staff, if they want to meet with me to discuss the negotiations or the consultation process.

There's a wide range of groups on that external advisory panel: the Algonquin Eco Watch, Canadian Sport-fishing Industry, federation of anglers and hunters, federation of snowmobile clubs, Ontario Trails Council, the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association—various sport clubs, the sport fishing industry. They have had input into this conversation already and will have more.

I think that the tack that we've taken is to get a full picture of what the concerns are from the outset and then begin to hone down the agreement and get at the details.

The other group that has been place, which I'm sure you know, is the municipal advisory committee. Again, there are 31 different municipalities that sit on that group, and they will have an opportunity to weigh in on the agreement in principle.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** One minute.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** The municipalities felt that there was some good consultation there; however, the other external user groups—I've heard from those organizations that they had not been consulted with. Some were quite surprised that their names were listed. One was the archdiocese in the Ottawa area; they didn't even know. They had no idea there was any process in any way, shape or form—that they were included.

All I did was write the list of names that you provided or the ministry provided and asked them how they felt things were going.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The archdiocese is not on this list that I've got, so I don't know where that came from. But I certainly have been very clear publicly that there will be more consultation opportunity, and, as I say, I'd be happy to meet with the committee of external advisers if that's what they'd like.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you, Minister. We'll now move on to the third party. You have 10 minutes. MPP Campbell.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you. Is this our last rotation?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Okay, thank you.

I'd first like to just start off very briefly with addressing the comment that was made by Minister Wynne that my role as an MPP, regardless of my political stripe, is to work with all the parties and with the ministries. I want to be very clear that that is what I'm here to do.

Just to set the record straight, I did write you a letter asking you to meet personally with the community because they did—I'm talking about Shoal Lake 39. At that point they did say to me that they were frustrated with having people who were able to speak to the technical aspects but who weren't able to make decisions. That's what I was referring to. I wasn't trying to say anything that was disrespectful to anybody at any job working in

the ministry. It's just that when people have the expectation that they should be able to enter into agreements and have decisions made and that they're going forward and that there is clear progress being made, and then to have the next meeting and find out, "We're sorry. These decisions actually weren't really made and we aren't able to go ahead," is frustrating.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have no information that would suggest that there was that two-steps-forward-one-step-back process. My understanding is that the conversation has been on a trajectory towards an action plan. Once that action plan is in place, if there are decision points, obviously I'd be happy to sit down with the community. I'd meet with the chief—whatever. I offered that to him. I said that I would meet with him. But unless there are decisions to be made, if it's still in the stage of trying to sort out what the way forward will be, then there isn't as much of a role. I'm happy to be part of a decision-making process; absolutely.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Okay. I think that's maybe where we differ with our interpretations of the treaty. My interpretation is that the crown should be meeting directly.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But the government is—sorry, I just have to be clear. To suggest that the crown is not meeting, that the government is not meeting, when bureaucrats, when employees of the government are meeting on my behalf because they have the expertise and they have the capacity to take those meetings and move the process forward—to suggest that that is not the crown meeting with the community, I think that's a difficult contention, because what that means is that the only meetings that would be relevant would be when the Premier is in the room meeting with all the communities.

You know, as a politician, that that's not practical, and what that would do is, that would stall every process that we're engaged in. And that's not what I would like to see. What I want to see is these processes go forward. I want the people with the expertise in the room, meeting with the community. When there are decision points, then we get the people who can make the decisions in the room.

1630

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I can say that I strongly encourage you to meet with the community. I appreciate that you've offered that. I know they would very much like that. I want to leave that point—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To meet with them again, because I have met with them. I'd be happy—

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** In the community, or was that—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In the community. I travelled to Shoal Lake and I met in the community.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Okay. The question that I have for you next is: In your opinion as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, are First Nations people citizens of Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That sounds like a legal question. Are First Nations people citizens of Ontario?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I don't want you to overthink it. In your opinion, as you're carrying out your duties—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Should they have the same opportunities as anyone else? Absolutely.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Okay. My question then is: Why are they not afforded the same quality-of-life opportunities and even, at the very basic, mortality rates as the rest of Ontarians? Why is the provincial ministry okay with the fact that there seems to be this jurisdictional fight? The ministry really isn't stepping in. They seem to be all right with the fact that there is this conflict and that they don't have to step up.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm sorry; I just have to say that there are layers of assumptions in that question that are just not accurate. Accusing us—accusing me—of being fine with there being a discrepancy between the quality of life in First Nations communities or aboriginal communities and in non-aboriginal is just not accurate, because I'm not okay with that.

Asserting that somehow I'm fine with the notion that aboriginal kids don't do as well at school and are not succeeding at the same rates as non-aboriginal kids—I mean—

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Can I interrupt—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have to say—I'm just going to tell you a quick story. I really started—

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Minister, I'm sorry; this is the last 10 minutes. I appreciate that. The reason why I'm saying that—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But you're—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** But wait a second—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Zimmer, you're out of order.

Minister, would you allow her to finish her question, and then you can respond? But don't interrupt her during her question, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I was in the middle of my answer.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would suggest that you allow her to answer, but we don't need statistics. She wants a direct answer.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** My answer is, I'm not okay, and our government is not okay, with the outcomes—the health outcomes, the education outcomes, the economic outcomes—in the aboriginal communities, which is why we have done all the work that we've done, that I've been talking about for the last seven hours, that our ministry has been doing and our government has been doing.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I appreciate that. The reason why I ask that is because when I have raised a number of issues with you, in whatever form I've raised them, I've been told, "We care about this. We want to do something. But that's the federal government; that's their responsibility." Even if I look through all the Hansard, that's what's being said.

When I talked to you earlier today, and in fact before the session rose in June, about the changes made to the discretionary benefits—the fact is that this is costing

Ontario very little; it is very much within Ontario's control, because Ontario sets the rates. The feds kick in the 92%, so Ontario's only on the hook for the 8%.

I'm just saying that when I read this material—I would be okay with the fact that it's a work in progress—I understand that—except for the fact that everything that I have read, that you've stated before estimates—and when I read Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs, it tells a different story. In it, you're talking about the accolades that the ministry is getting for doing such a great job, but I contend that there is so much that needs to be done, that's not being done, and that when the issues are raised time and time again, whether it's OxyContin, whether it's consultation, which is very much within the purview and the control of the ministry—this stuff is, time and time again, not being done.

Even as recently as what has happened with Shoal Lake 40—it has been made public that there's another municipality in Manitoba that is going to be using the water that is exported to Manitoba, and rather than the province putting its foot down and saying, "No, this is not going to happen, for a number of reasons," the province seems simply content with allowing that to happen.

The minister does have an obligation to Shoal Lake's economy, which has been shut down because of the exportation of this water; the well-being of the First Nations communities; their rights and interests, including consultation; and the legislation that already exists, even if it's outside of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, that states that water cannot be directed outside of its watershed.

We're still seeing decisions that are being made, on an ongoing basis, that are not living up to this promise.

I'll quote Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs, that was released in the spring of 2005: "The McGuinty government is committed to creating a new and positive era in the province's relationship with aboriginal peoples..." Yet we are still hearing communities—whether it's Chief Peter Moonias of Neskantaga First Nation around the Ring of Fire saying that he's willing to lay down his life because consultation has not occurred.

I'm simply saying that I don't think that this is a proud moment in our history, and I recognize that maybe steps are being made, but it is not a time to talk about accolades.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate your point of view, and I understand that it is the point of view that for your own political reasons you have to take. My reasons—

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** It's not my political reasons. I care about these communities—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Can I answer now?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Minister, I think you're insinuating that there is a political motive on her part to—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Chair, that's not appropriate—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Zimmer, you're out of order.



*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** You're out of order, Mr. Zimmer.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** No, I'm not. She is—

**The Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** That's the last time I'm going to warn you.

**Mr. David Zimmer:**—entitled to answer—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Zimmer, you're out of order. I did not recognize you. I'm now getting back to the minister.

I'd appreciate it, Minister, if you would not go after the MPP for partisan reasons; if you would just stick to the issues. Okay? Thank you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, fair enough.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Once more, and that's it.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** And what, Chair?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** And then you'll be removed.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** You have no authority to do that. You're blowing smoke again.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Here's what I need to say about this. On every one of the issues that has been raised, Ms. Campbell—whether it's on health issues, whether it's education, when you talk about OxyContin and you talk about the addiction strategies, whether it's on water and jurisdictional issues, whether it's on the roads—on all of those issues, there are complexities. There is progress that is being made. There are efforts being made. There is money that's being invested. There's expertise being afforded those processes.

Are we moving as quickly as you would like to or as I would like to? No. I would like all of those issues resolved. When I talk about—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you, Minister. Time's up. We'll now move for the last 10 minutes to Mr. Zimmer. You have the floor this time.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you. Two questions: On the Ipperwash report, recommendations generally from 2 through to 16 or 17 dealt with the justice's ideas and thoughts and recommendations on how the aboriginal community and, in this case, the OPP, the policing authority, could have a better relationship, because there was a sense that antagonisms had developed between those two communities, the policing community and the aboriginal community, and those antagonisms in and of themselves exacerbated the situation and perhaps may have led to consequences that might not have happened had there been a better relationship, and so on. There were a number of quite specific recommendations and then some general observations about how the justice would have liked to see that. What are your thoughts on that? What progress are we making on that front?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You're talking about the policing recommendations that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes. There were some quite detailed ones and then some more general ones. Just a general observation.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. And you're talking about recommendations 2 through which, Mr. Zimmer?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** About 16 or 17. They all have a theme about working together.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes. I'm just going to give you, again, the beginning of this answer, and then I'll ask staff to fill in any details that I miss.

As you say, there is a theme. There are some protocols and some guidelines that the inquiry suggested should be put in place. For example, if we look at, "Police planning for responding to an aboriginal occupation or protest should include ... a communication strategy for important messages ... technical aspects of how the police would communicate with the occupiers ... specified people outside the police service who could effectively communicate with the occupiers," the progress is that these things have been addressed through OPP standard operating procedures. They are also addressed through a new Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services policing guideline, which is Policing Aboriginal Occupations and Protests, and that guideline was approved and distributed to police services in February 2012.

If I take another one here, "The Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs, in consultation with aboriginal organizations, should compile a list of available negotiators and facilitators who could assist the government to quickly and peacefully resolve aboriginal issues that emerge," what has happened there is that that list has been compiled and is maintained by our ministry, and the vendor-of-record process is being considered at this point.

1640

I'll pick another one: "The province of Ontario should enact a regulation pursuant to the Police Services Act requiring officers to file a use-of-force report when they point a long gun or rifle, regardless of whether a shot is fired." The way that's being addressed is that the equipment and use-of-force regulation under the Police Services Act was amended in 2008.

So we've really gone chapter and verse of the recommendations to put in place a different regime, I would suggest, and I think that's the point. You've asked a question specifically about Ipperwash, but I think that's actually where I was trying to go in my previous answer, which is that there aren't simple answers, because even if you look at these recommendations, there are still issues in terms of those relationships, those aboriginal/non-aboriginal policing relationships. There are still issues if we talk about clean water or health outcomes or education outcomes. Those issues are going to prevail for some time to come.

But I think in this ministry and on this file what we have to do is we have to be able to gauge how we're moving forward, and be able to say, "These are the strategies that we've put in place, these are the projects that have gone forward," and then evaluate those projects—"This is the money that's been invested, and these are the

outcomes we can see for that money.” There’s no easy solution to any of these issues, and I think personally that we do a disservice to the public if we suggest that there are easy solutions. If we as politicians dumb down the rhetoric to the point where we say that if we just point our finger at a party—and I mean small-p party, not capital P, so not in a partisan way—if we point at this party or this party, this stakeholder, and say, “If they had just done X, then the whole problem would be solved”—if you take policing or take education, there are many, many players. There are different orders of government; there are different governments within the aboriginal community who need to weigh in and need to have opinions on these things.

So, to go back to your question about these particular recommendations, we’ve been very strategic about looking at every recommendation, implementing and moving on them. Are they all complete? No. But on all of those recommendations that you reference there has been progress.

I’ll just end with another one, and this is number 15: “Crisis counselling services should be made available and accessible to individuals who are involved in violent or traumatic events involving police action. The responsibility for provision of the crisis counselling should rest with the provincial government in relation to police conduct that occurs off reserve land and with the federal government concerning police conduct which occurs on reserve land. The type of services offered should be responsive to the type of treatment required, and informed by the cultural and traditional practices and beliefs of the aboriginal persons requiring the counselling and support.”

I used that recommendation because it really shows the layered complexity. It shows that different orders of government are involved. In our response, it’s the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Ministry of Health that are all involved in the response, so there are a number of programs that have been put in place in response to that recommendation.

The Attorney General sponsors the victim crisis assistance and referral service, and that is a service that provides immediate on-site service to victims of crime, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Attorney General also provided one-time funding through the aboriginal Victim Support Grant Program in 2010 and 2011.

Programs and services funded under the joint aboriginal healing and wellness strategy—that’s where the Ministry of Health comes in—include a network of culturally appropriate and community-based health and healing services; and those include some of the crisis intervention teams and counselling services that were referenced in the recommendation, as well as healing lodges, which I think speaks to the traditional and cultural imperatives. The Ministry of Health also administers the mental health help line, which is a database of programs, services and resources related to mental health and addictions.

So the response is complex because the problem is complex, and the recommendation reflects that complexity.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** We’re getting to the end of the day, Minister, and here’s kind of a thought experiment. If years down the road, many years down the road, you’re sitting in your favourite reading chair reflecting on your careers in past years, and you specifically think of your time as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, how would you like to be remembered?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would like to be remembered as someone who was able to bring people to the table and who was able to come to resolution of at least some of the complex and thorny issues that confront the aboriginal community. I’d also like to be remembered as someone who was able to move the bar a little bit, particularly on aboriginal education, because I believe that if we can figure out how to improve the outcomes for aboriginal youth—and, to be fair, for aboriginal adults who come back into the system, because I think adult education is a big part of how we’re going to be successful—if we can move the bar somewhat, if we can get to the point where there are more communities who feel that they have more control over the education of their children, on the one hand, and that the publicly funded provincial system actually tells a better history of the relationship between—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** One minute.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, then I think that we can say that we have been successful. Certainly that’s something that I will be proud of.

Related to that is that I would like us to be remembered as a government that was able to move the bar on economic development and have some success, particularly on initiatives like the Ring of Fire, because I think that is a huge opportunity for the north—not just for the aboriginal community, but particularly for the aboriginal community.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Well, I must compliment you, because I know last week—you’re not only the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs but the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—you were in Ottawa taking meeting after meeting after meeting with large municipalities, small municipalities and townships, dealing with all of those issues with the same understanding and the same detail that you do in aboriginal affairs. I don’t know how you manage two ministries, but thank you—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Time is up.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much. I’ve got great staff.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Now I would just like to make a comment. Mr. Zimmer was correct when he said that—and I’m one to admit when I’m wrong. The Chairman does not have the ability to throw someone out of the committee, but what he does have the ability to do is call a 20-minute recess until decorum has recovered. So that’s the tool that Mr. Miller will use in the future. And I want to be remembered as Mr. Congeniality, okay?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Good luck with that, Chair.



**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** And now—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Are you guys all retiring, here?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes, sounds good.

We're now required to vote on the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Shall vote 2001 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall I report the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to the House? All in favour? Agreed. Carried.

That completes our consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. I'd like to close by thanking the minister and her staff for being very patient and well behaved, unlike some others.

The committee is now adjourned until—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Chair, could I just say one thing?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes, you may.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I don't think it got on the record. I want to thank everyone for affording me this opportunity, but I particularly want to thank the staff of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, all the people sitting behind who are the brains of the operation. They really do a fantastic job, so thank you very much.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** And they were very nice and quiet, too.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** They were fantastic.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** The committee is now adjourned until tomorrow, September 5, at 3:45 or after routine proceedings, when we will begin to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This committee stands adjourned. Thank you, folks.

*The committee adjourned at 1649.*











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**Wednesday 5 September 2012**

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**Mercredi 5 Septembre 2012**

**Standing Committee on  
Estimates**

Ministry of Training,  
Colleges and Universities

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère de la Formation  
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## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 5 September 2012

Mercredi 5 Septembre 2012

*The committee met at 1550 in room 1.*

## ELECTION OF ACTING CHAIR

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quoioc Lim):** Good afternoon, honourable members. It is my duty to call upon you to elect an Acting Chair. Are there any nominations? Mr. Leone.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I wish to nominate Mr. Vanthof.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quoioc Lim):** Mr. Vanthof, do you accept the nomination?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quoioc Lim):** Are there any further nominations? Further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed and Mr. Vanthof elected Acting Chair of the committee.

MINISTRY OF TRAINING,  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Good afternoon, committee members. We're here today for the consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, which was selected for a total of 15 hours of review. The ministry is required to monitor proceedings for any questions or issues that the ministry undertakes to address. I trust that the deputy minister has made arrangements to have the hearings closely monitored with respect to questions raised so that the ministry can respond accordingly. If you wish, you may, at the end of your appearance, verify the questions and issues being tracked by the research officer.

I now call vote 3001. We will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minutes by the minister, followed by statements of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition and the third party. Then the minister will have up to 30 minutes for a reply. The remaining time, if any, will be apportioned equally among the three parties.

Minister?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson and colleagues. It's a great pleasure to be here. It's a very important part of our democratic process and we've been preparing for this with great enthusiasm. We look for your input and the opportunity to provide some accountability for the ministry.

I'm just going to introduce my deputy and then ask her to introduce the members of the team. Any questions you have, we've got the full range of our management expertise here to help out. So my great deputy is Deputy Deborah Newman. I'll turn it over to her to do the introductions of the staff.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** Thank you very much, Minister Murray. I'm very pleased to be joined at committee by our senior executive team. Our ADMs are present, including David Fulford, the ADM responsible for the employment and training division; Nancy Naylor, the ADM responsible for the post-secondary education division; Marie-Lison Fougère, ADM for the strategic programs and policy division; Grant Clarke, acting ADM for the French-language and aboriginal learning division; and Warren McCay, acting ADM responsible for corporate management services, our CAO. Thank you very much.

We're also joined by several other officials who have expertise in various technical areas should the committee wish to receive further information.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Okay. Thank you very much.

What I'd like to do is just, in the first hour, give you a bit of an overview of where the ministry is at right now, what some of the key trends have been in the last couple of years, where we're going, and give you hopefully a bit of context so we can explain a little bit about not just the whats that we're doing, but the whys.

I think the government—and I think it's probably shared with all members of the Legislature—understands that our universities, colleges and training programs are arguably one of the most important and foundational ministries in a provincial government. Our new economy, driven by innovation, really looks to our ability as Ontarians to attract and retain capital for investment.

The one thing probably more important than that is the thing that attracts that capital, which is talent and the educated level and skills of our workforce in the trades, apprenticeships, colleges and universities. Our ability to build and retain a high-skills workforce is fundamental to our social policy, to reducing poverty at one end, and to our economic policy in a knowledge economy in driving the growth of that. We have some very clear aspirations, which I'll get into, and look forward to your comments.

The government started with the Reaching Higher plan, which was a \$6.2-billion investment in our universities and colleges and apprenticeships. It was arguably



one of the largest expansions of investment in post-secondary education in Ontario, and it really came at a time when we hit extraordinary global economic turbulence, with the worst recession in our lifetime, the rise and fall of the tech industry and the rapid expansion in mobility of capital.

There was an interesting study by Richard Florida, published at University of Toronto, pointing out that young folk spend as little as three years in one city and one year in a job and are as likely to graduate from university to start a business as to go and seek employment. So it puts a lot more demands on the university and college platform to meet the increasingly rapidly changing needs of young people. As my friend John Polanyi, Canada's Nobel laureate, said when asked what age we live in, we live in the age of acceleration, where change is happening so fast that the normal systems of government and business and academia can't make decisions in time to understand change, never mind anticipate it. So I think for all of us, as public policy makers in this field, this is a time of great challenge.

That \$6.2 billion was really started as a result of about 13 years where we saw really no net growth in any of our university/college budgets. We almost had the same budgets in 2003 as we had in 1990. As a matter of fact, in many of our northern colleges and universities, we saw as much as 25% and 30% actual net reductions in spending. We were also coming in at a time when the demand for colleges and universities was growing rapidly but the capacity had been shrinking.

So the government set out to really achieve what we called Putting Students First, our first Putting Students First policy, and part of the goal of that—and we've come pretty close to achieving it right now—was, over the next decade, to increase the capacity of the post-secondary system by about 250,000 students. I think right now we're at about 210,000.

In the years ahead, the government's efforts will focus on the needs of students as a top priority. We'll continue to work with our colleges and universities to build on this past success and to align our strengths and aspirations with the college and university sector.

I would also just like to take a moment to really thank the great leadership that's not just caused by our management, by our staff, by the unions, by our students who have worked to build the system, but the incredible leadership that's come from Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities, whom we have had as great partners in developing policy, coordinating dialogue in the sector, understanding the current needs and anticipating changing needs.

Out of, I think, the conversations that we've had in the provincial Parliament, a number of things have emerged that are really critical.

One is integrating employment and training services across government through Employment Ontario, which is a major initiative that we are in the middle of right now, which my deputy is fearlessly leading, and I say "fearlessly" because if you've ever tried to pull together

employment programs from 11 different ministries, it takes huge courage to do that in a short period of time.

Promoting apprenticeship completion to increase supply of skilled workers: I think this is a system that has not seen reform in almost half a century. It's now going through, arguably, one of the biggest reforms and re-thinkings through the work of Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Whitaker.

Maintaining support for the Second Career program: This is a program that I think we're particularly proud of because it has been imitated in so many different places. One of the things that happened in the recession that hit us and hit the entire Western world in 2008 was about a quarter of a million jobs lost, but it was the nature of that job loss that I think profoundly underlined the importance of colleges and universities and apprenticeships. Of the people who lost jobs, as has been pointed out by many of my colleagues and I think many of you, 81% of them had a high-school-or-less education.

As we came out of this recession, and we're at somewhere upwards of 550,000 jobs created since, 70% of those jobs require university or college education, or a trade.

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One of the great challenges for our university and college system is that it's been generally tooled to meet the needs of young high school graduates. It has re-tooled itself, and I think they've done it quite brilliantly, to meet the needs of older workers who sometimes have been out of the education system for 10 or 20 years. Many of them never even completed high school. Some 62,000, I think, is the latest number. The deputy will jump in if I get any of these numbers wrong, I'm sure. At this point, we have 62,000 older workers who have gone back to school, back into a trade, back into apprenticeship. This program provides \$28,000 to each of these families to keep them financially secure so they don't drop through the bottom of the social safety net.

We're over about 80%, I think, of these folks, or 76% of these folks, who have landed jobs in the fields that they studied for. You can imagine the relief. If you had never, ever been able to get that education, you lose your job and you're in a moment of terror. The industry that you were in before for some reason has been disrupted by the economic change, and you managed to get those kinds of skills. That is not easy, and I think we should have huge respect for the people who put themselves through that. This is a program that continues to be a high-demand program in the ministry and one that we get probably more calls about than almost any other from other parts of the world, especially other industrial manufacturing economies or resource economies that have gone through that kind of downturn.

Right now, about 64% of Ontario adults have post-secondary education. That's up from just about 50% in 2003. For the Premier of this province, if he had one very determined goal—and he had many, but this was certainly a priority one—it was to achieve a 70% attainment rate for post-secondary education. We're well on track for

that. We are within spitting distance, quite frankly, of achieving that 70%, and that will actually line up with the 70% of jobs that require university or college education.

The spectrum of that has been quite amazing in the range across socio-economic groups and in aid. Our colleges are attracting more mature students, often in their 20s and 30s. Some of them, interestingly, even have university education; we now find they are tracking back to college to get a college program to get the skills on top of the theoretical education. The colleges have been handling that. One of the things we're discovering is that it's very hard to predict demand because individuals in a lifelong learning economy, like we are in right now, can re-enter for a partial education or a complete education or supplemental education repeatedly through that.

Ontario now has about 210,000 new students, as I mentioned earlier; 60,000 new apprenticeships, up to 120,000—one of the things that we're very proud of. This has been extraordinary, not just by the students who do that, but by many entrepreneurs, labour leaders, college folks, that our apprenticeships are now growing by 30,000, and probably greater than that this year. We're now seeing the fastest growth we've seen ever in apprenticeships in Ontario, so that is pretty exciting news for all of us.

We have 114 college confirmations for first-year fall entry. That exceeds the double cohort confirmations in 2003. So we now have more students entering our colleges than in 2003—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Sorry, 114,000. Thank God you have a deputy.

To date for 2011-12, Ontario has issued approximately \$1.1 billion in grants and loans, including the 30% tuition grant. I think \$380 million was what we did back in 2003. Ontario has one of the most generous financial aid programs in Canada, supporting our students and the workforce of the future. Ontario's publicly funded PSA system includes 20 universities and 24 colleges of applied arts and technology.

The Ontario employment network has helped more than one million Ontarians in the last year, including more than 90,000 employers in Ontario. It is one of the most successful networks in Canada. Employment Ontario invests more than \$1 billion annually in employment services. Despite the challenging economic times we discussed earlier, Ontario will continue to invest in the post-secondary sector.

In keeping with the recommendations made by the Drummond commission, funding provided to the sector will grow at a sustainable pace. As you may remember, Mr. Drummond said that given the importance of education, there was no net gain if you cut in this area. You just really cut off the supply of talent to the economy, and there would be consequential diminishments on the other side of the ledger.

In 2012, the Ontario budget, Strong Action, announced that funding for Ontario colleges and universities will increase by \$111 million in this coming fiscal year, rising

to \$155 million in 2014. Stability is being provided to the sector through multi-year frameworks and a number of modest expenditure management measures that are being implemented in light of the current fiscal challenges.

Although enrolment growth has moderated in the past year, we are still committed to the 60,000 additional spaces—budget 2012's commitment to improve access to colleges and universities. The government will continue to strengthen student aid to ensure that every qualified student has access to post-secondary education and we will continue the new 30%-off tuition grant, which, you may know, is indexed to increase with the rate of increase in tuition.

In the 2012 budget, the government also announced that it would further improve employment training programs and services to better prepare Ontarians to meet the increasing challenges of the global economy. Programs would focus on delivering measurable results such as integrating employment services and strengthening apprenticeships and maintaining the Second Career program.

More than 363,000 students—the full-time head count—are enrolled in Ontario universities. In our colleges, we now have 181,000 students. To give you a little summary of enrolment growth, enrolment for the 2011-12 year indicates that there are more than 544,000 eligible-for-funding, full-time students that are enrolled in colleges and universities. That represents a 2% increase over 2010-11—essentially more than 10,500 students than in the previous year. More than 150,000, or 38%, more students are attending colleges and universities than in 2002-03. Post-secondary enrolment growth for the last decade was about five times higher than in the 1990s. Between 2002-03 and 2011-12, enrolments increased by 57%. So if you just think about that scale of expansion, that is huge. There are very few things in our society that have grown, that have been in that much demand, and that gives you a little sense of how much Ontarians value post-secondary education and seek it out.

We have in the graduate area, which, as you know, historically has been a challenge for Ontario—we're quite happy to report that we have 9,542 additional masters students as well as 4,750 additional Ph.D. full-time-equivalent enrolments.

Completion rates for students: 81% of undergraduate students are now completing university, up from 73% in 2002, and 65% of college students are graduating, compared to 57% in 2002; 92% of 2008 university grads, at the worst of the recession, were employed within six months. You've heard the Premier talk at times about—in the recession we actually had increased job uptake for people with university education, and you see that in the results of our 2008 grads, and that has continued since.

Even during the challenging market—sorry. College graduation rate is 83% within six months of graduation today, and the employer satisfaction rate with college graduates is 93%. That is really quite remarkable. You will not find many public education systems or private institutions, when you go to the people who hire the



students, where you get a 93% satisfaction rate, which speaks not only to the quality of our education but, particularly in the college and skills-based area, how relevant to employers the skills are that the college is putting out.

Student satisfaction rate with the quality of their programs and learning experience, which we evaluate—and it's very important to us—is 77%, and that's the same with universities. In the National Survey of Student Engagement, the university student satisfaction rate was also 77%.

Anyone who has a college or university anywhere near you will be aware of the provincial capital program and also, generously from our federal government, matching dollars in many cases for that. Our contributions under the Reaching Higher plan have been \$2.45 billion invested in capital funding for Ontario colleges and universities, providing really critical investment in capacity for this rapidly growing student body and providing them with excellent technology, housing, labs and advanced facilities.

In May 2009, Canada and Ontario announced infrastructure investments totalling \$1.5 billion for 49 projects at Ontario's colleges and universities through the federal knowledge infrastructure program, KIP, and the 2009 Ontario budget. And there's been a very high level of synergy in planning and collaboration with the federal government in these programs.

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In addition to that, we as the Ontario government added \$75 million to provide support for eight more projects at institutions that did not receive funding under the federal program. So for those institutions that were provincial priorities or for communities often where members both in the government and on the opposition side had come forward with that, the government found additional money.

As part of the ministry's long-term infrastructure plan, we announced funding of \$594 million towards 20 capital projects at 10 colleges and nine universities.

I want to thank my colleague, Minister Chiarelli, who has worked very closely with us to ensure that there is room and that we're not just building only roads for cars, but we're building pathways for students as well.

As many of you know—and I want to thank all of you, because many of you, completely non-partisanly—there's been great interest from folks in all parties in the three new campuses. We have huge capacity challenges. We have a lot of high-growth communities in Ontario that are underserved. We also realize—and I've received letters from many members of the Legislature who have pointed out—that one of the biggest costs for students is that if you live in a community that's a high-growth community where you can't go to college or university, the cost of relocating to a large city like Toronto or Ottawa can be very expensive. You're very familiar with—we inherited a commitment and an initial investment for the northern medical school; we've continued that. We now have a law school in Thunder Bay and a medical school that spans northern communities—Sudbury.

We also know that to build capacity in the north is really, really critical, and if northern Ontarians can get their education—we also know that it builds alumni and it builds more sophisticated employment networks that, as things like the Ring of Fire expand, a lot of those jobs are not blue-collar jobs; a lot of them are human resource jobs, finance jobs, administrative jobs, and we want to see cities in northern Ontario actually build the talent base so they can build the additional value and additional higher-value jobs and businesses that go with that. So we'll be working with you on that. We're also looking at unmet community needs, aboriginal communities and others like these.

I want to thank the member of provincial Parliament for Cambridge. We've had a very good discussion about some of these things, and I think we're always at our best when we're Ontarians before we're partisan because these kinds of initiatives really have to get out there in front of community need. It's very hard today to be a successful community if you don't have some sort of post-secondary institution. It's just vital to the success of most cities and most towns in Ontario, large and small.

More student spaces: We have support right now to colleges and universities of \$111 million in 2013, growing by \$155 million in 2011-12. I won't repeat that. I think I've already bored you to death with graduate spaces.

Research support: This has probably been one of the biggest areas. Ontario is one of the highest investors per capita in the world in public sector research dollars. We do that with the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation. We have, with the federal government, wraparound programs that provide high-value research dollars. It's quite extraordinary. We are seeing now increasingly from the private sector more dollars in investment in research, and we're working with the federal government on a number of studies that look at the measurement of technology, R&D and commercialization.

Queen's University's Parteq program right now, the president there tells me, is the fourth-ranked in the world, and we're seeing some of the best platforms for acceleration and research right now almost anywhere in the Western world.

Our medical school commitment is very important. Since 2009, we've been providing our medical schools with an additional \$20 million each year to help support high-quality innovative medical education for students. Through our investments, we are creating 100 first-year medical school spaces, establishing four new medical education campuses and improving the quality of undergraduate medical education. With an aging population, you can appreciate that this profession and the training of this profession continues to be an absolute critical priority. We've been working with Ontario medical schools in planning this expansion. The additions include 24 new spaces in 2009-10, 67 in 2010-11 and, in the coming fiscal year, an additional nine spaces.

Demand for nurses: We have more than 4,000 new full-time nurses enrolled in nursing degree programs in

2011-12. In 2012-13, we provided colleges and universities with over \$109 million to support nursing degree programs in Ontario and provided an additional \$99.7 million for the extension of the nursing graduate program, guaranteed to provide new Ontario nursing graduates with an opportunity to gain full-time employment. Our government is also providing colleges and universities with \$11 million to enhance clinical education in nursing programs, which again connects people to life-long learning.

One of the areas that has been really quite positive: This is one of the areas in nursing where colleges and universities show a high degree of collaboration in joint programs, in sharing facilities and getting much greater value for the tax dollar. It is one of the models that, as we're going through our reform and transformation package about how we get institutions to share platforms and share services and reduce duplication so we get better value for students' tuition dollars and tax dollars, really, the nursing schools have been some who have been leading the way in showing best practices in this area as well as meeting an incredibly important need.

Financial assistance arguably has emerged and continues to emerge as one of the most important areas. I mentioned the \$1.1 billion in grants and the 30% off tuition, but that builds on a number of other initiatives that we have undertaken.

Almost half, just over 45%, of all full-time students attending an Ontario college or university qualified for the Ontario student assistance plan. With the introduction of the OTG, the share of students receiving OSAP increased to over half. An additional 53,900 non-OSAP students received the 30%-off tuition grant. Most of these had never received student financial assistance before.

We're really experimenting with this in some ways, and we'll be reviewing it again in the spring, because we brought it in in January, in the middle of an academic year, so it's hard to get a good measure of that because people have already enrolled.

One of the things in the demographic changes, if you go knock on doors—Vic and I went and knocked on doors in his constituency. One of the things the Premier noticed—and my predecessor John Milloy, and we heard from Vic and Amrit and Bob Delaney and folks, if I just go around, Michael Chan—is, we have a lot larger demographic families. We have many communities, and many of the high-growth communities, where it is not unusual to find four, five or six kids at home and often grandma and grandpa living at home with the family as well. So there's a lot of financial stress on the new demographic that has emerged, particularly in the 905. The 30% tuition grant, if you've got three, four or five kids going into college or university—one of the great things that we know about, especially with recently arrived first-generation families: huge importance on their children getting their education. You know, my family came from eastern Europe. I was the first person to go to university within my entire family. I remember my grandmother, who was living with us at the time, when I applied, was

the first one—she got up at the ungodly hours of the morning, even before the postman came, to see if the letter carrier had actually brought that. She said to me, "The most important piece of paper in our family's history was when I got my citizenship. The second most important one is when my grandson gets an acceptance letter to university or college." We know these are deeply emotional because they really are the second passport, in a sense, to success in Canadian society. When you come from a newcomer family—so many Ontarians relate to that—these things are not just opportunities for their children; they are important standards of success and they are often the realization of the dreams of parents.

So we see this expansion, this ability to make sure that every qualified student has a seat in a university or a college, as a—well, I would almost call it a sacred commitment to Ontario families, and one that we have invested heavily in. I want to thank all of you, whatever party you're from, because I know there are many here who are not in our party who also advocate. I want to thank my colleagues in the Liberal governments before who made these investments before I had the pleasure of sitting with all of you.

The 30% tuition grant is really our first step in trying to meet those needs and trying to understand the demographic changes and move forward with that, and we are continuing those conversations with the students and with the sector to better retool and tool our financial programs. To that, we've had some initial advice from Don Drummond, and we continue, through the discussions, getting ample advice. The Ontario Undergraduate Students' Association just supplied us about a month ago with an 88-page submission, so we know it's being taken quite seriously.

OSAP improvements, other than the 30% off: We're providing access grants to students from low- and middle-income families, including crown wards, and I'm very proud of the crown wards program that we now have in place. We have increased OSAP student loans, making it easier for students, capping students' annual repayable debt at \$7,300, reducing expected parental income from middle-income families—this is one of the things that we are finding with the 30% grant. We often had assistance for very-low-income families or people of very modest means, but for middle-class families struggling through the recession, this really came forward. I know my colleague from Windsor, MPP Piruzza, who worked in the middle of employment aid, is very aware of this, and I want to thank you for the advice and help you've given us on this.

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Providing relief to students struggling to repay their loans—you know of that program—and creating a new distance grant: Under the direct results of our investment in student assistance, the number of Ontario college and university students qualifying for OSAP has increased by 77% because more middle-income families and more higher-needs students can now qualify. Ontario graduate scholarships: I'll just quickly—how are we doing for time, there?



*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Two minutes? Okay. Maybe I will skip that and I will just get to a few other things.

I just want to talk a little bit about French language. We have replaced the old \$1,400 francophone one-time grant with a \$1,600 university grant. What's been really interesting is, we're seeing the highest growth in our francophone colleges right now. Our college enrolment—we just got the first numbers out in the last couple of weeks—was 3%. Collège Boréal, which is about to open up a new, small campus in downtown Toronto, grew by 14%.

One of the things that's been particularly important to us is the importance of the French language in places like Timmins, Sudbury and eastern Ontario particularly. French is very much a working language, and we know our francophone colleges and our bilingual universities play a particular role in that. We believe that the tuition grant, which provides more generous support—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Minister, you have one minute remaining.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I will wrap up, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. This is my very first estimates, so please be gentle with me. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Minister. It's my first job at estimates as well.

Now I turn the floor over to the official opposition. You have 30 minutes for statements and questions.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Well, Minister, I think you're going to have another half an hour after our party and the third party get a chance, so whatever you didn't finish, you can get to in a few minutes.

I'm going to start to talk about some of the things that you mentioned in your opening remarks, particularly with respect to the Ontario tuition grant. I know a lot of MPPs have received some commentary from various groups and students who qualify for it and those who don't, as well. I guess the first question for you is, can you tell us exactly how many people receive the Ontario tuition grant?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'll actually give that to my deputy. Oh, she's going to tell me here, so I can answer you: 207,000 received it in its initial launch in the winter semester.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Great. When we met in May—I have to say, Minister, our meetings have been pretty—I have enjoyed them. Given some of the information or lack of information that's come from estimates, I'm quite confident that you're going to be able to provide us with some answers to the questions that we provide.

Going to our meeting in May, you were suggesting that there was going to be a 60% uptake of the program in its first semester, and you expect the uptake to be 75% in the year 2012-13. Are you on track to achieving that goal?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Let me be clear. Our typical pattern—and we've never done this before. We made a commitment last election that we would introduce this for January 1. I will never forget that day in early

November when the Premier looked at me and said, "We will have this ready, Minister, for January 1." With Christmas in between, there went my holidays.

We did get it up and operating. I want to thank the ministry staff. I don't know how they did it; they made me look obsolete—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** So you're saying Dalton McGuinty is Santa Claus? Is that what you're suggesting?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I felt like the overworked elf that month, but we did deliver it. I always take credit for their work, and I'll do that again now, but the staff were pretty extraordinary.

We got it out and we built it on the OSAP platform. We expected that the maximum take-up would be somewhere around 300,000 students. We knew we wouldn't get that. I think I said to you that about 60% was our hopeful target. We got to about 207,000. We're hoping that will grow.

Normal take-up on a program like this is 75% to, maybe, if we're lucky, 80% of eligible folks. Usually, that has taken anywhere from two to three years, with our past programs, to fully introduce them. Our expectation is that by—this is really our first full year with it, so we're going to review, and I'll gladly meet with you and give you sort of an update in the spring as to how it's going. But we should know by the spring how the first full year—we expect, barring any unforeseen circumstances, that we would start to be moving toward that 70% to 75% goal next year and then hopefully beyond that the year after.

Because we're in a period of fiscal restraint, coming back to balance, the controls on this program are quite restrictive, that you have to be within four years of high school, and you have to have a family income of under \$160,000, because in year five, as you probably know, the calculation of student aid is not against your parents' income, but it becomes against your income as a student, so the rules change under OSAP. The four-year window is really for the period of time in which it's determined against your parents' income, and there is an income test of \$160,000 in family income. So those restrictions are there.

We'll see what the number is, what kind of room we have in the budget when we get there, but those controls are in place because we're trying to meet the greatest need and we want to be prudent. This is not a time to have an unrestricted program out there where we can't predict the costs, so I'm going to guess we're erring on the side of probably being a little prudent. I would expect that we would see the numbers probably as under-budgeted projections at this point rather than over-budgeted projections. I think that's a prudent position to have at this point.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Your ministry conducted, I know, a pretty big public relations campaign last winter and spring to promote the tuition grants. Do you have an estimate of how much that cost?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** That would be a management question. I'll throw it over to my deputy, who knows the numbers, that detail, much better than I do.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** And I'm actually going to have to ask our communications director, Heather Wright, or Nancy Naylor for that answer.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Sorry, I'm going to think that Hansard wants you to come to the microphone to answer that.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Maybe I could just repeat it, if that's helpful: \$759,000.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Okay, and is the ministry planning on doing the same thing this year?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We've been doing a lot. I mean, quite frankly, for a program launch, that's not a huge amount of money comparative to what most governments would do. We've been doing a lot of earned media. I and my parliamentary assistant, Kevin Flynn, another person whose work I take a great amount of credit for, went around the province. We had quite outstanding support from the undergraduate student alliance and the College Student Alliance, as well as most of the student newspapers. I've also been doing high school visits, and we sent stuff out. We have kits, again, that we send out, which give the information. We've been encouraging MPPs to put this in their householders, and we have websites. So we've been relying as much as we can on earned media.

We're doing an evaluation right now as to what the uptake is. If we think there are student groups, groups of students or families that we have not been able to reach, we'll do that. We did a student run. We hired students and did a sign-up right on the campuses, which was quite successful.

Deputy, we're also looking at where we had the impacts. We're looking at the numbers from different colleges and universities. I haven't got those yet, but we'll get a sense of where the take-up was in the first semester we did that. If we notice a gap—if we notice, for example, Northern College had a terrible take-up rate—we may try to do some more targeted work, where if we have good take-up rates in institutions—I know York University, for example, just from the reports from the students out there, from the president, had a very, very good take-up rate, so I think we're pretty good there. We're getting pretty close. So it'll depend.

We would like to avoid the cost of another general blitz if we can, and focus, if we can, more on specifics, but I'll be taking advice from the deputy on that, and I'll certainly be happy to consult with you on that as well.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** That's great. I wondered, as well: Did that money that you spent, the \$700,000-plus—was that already accounted for in the budget, or was that extra money, an unplanned expense?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I sure hope so, but I'm going to ask the deputy here.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** Thanks very much. You know, given the era of fiscal constraint that we're all operating within and mindful of, the Ontario tuition grant was funded through offsets, including the advertising campaign to try to make students aware of the avail-

ability of this financial support for them. The ministry had to make some difficult decisions around finding financial offsets in order to fund the tuition grant program and support the government's commitment to needs-based financial aid for students. So all of the money that was spent on the tuition grant, including the advertising, is within our own allocation and through offsets.

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**Mr. Rob Leone:** What would have been offset to pay for the PR campaign?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** There is quite a list of offsets that were generally used to fund the tuition grant. If you're interested, we can go through that list of offsets.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Sure. I'll get to that in a second, actually; I have a question about that.

As far as I understand from our previous meeting, Minister, the government allotted \$480 million for the OTG, which was based on a 90% uptake. You said you were erring on the side of caution. I assume that means that the overall cost last year, or this year, is actually going to be substantially less than that. Can you give us a global number on how much the OTG costs?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I haven't seen the final numbers yet, because I haven't gotten those quarterly reports. As soon as I have them, they should be public.

There were a lot of offsets; you asked a little bit about that. We made a decision strategically to have a much more broad-based program that would go to many more students. So we looked at what were somewhat expensive programs that would go to less than 10,000, less than 20,000 students. So the francophone grant went—that was 800 students. The Queen Elizabeth scholarships were eliminated.

We made a conscious decision, when we looked at what was happening out there, that there was increasing support from the private sector, particularly for scholarships, and that we had an incentive program for that, which we now withdrew—we had phased it out; it was \$50 million down to \$25 million; it has now been phased out this year—that matched dollars from private companies. I have been quite assertive with folks in the private sector that—they like to give scholarships to students; we like them to do that, and we are directing more of our money to student aid. And so you saw that transition through.

The deputy probably can give you, and I can—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** They're actually my next questions: Where are the offsets, and how much in value? So you might as well get to that.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Those were some of them, and I think there were about seven or eight of them that were used.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** Okay, just an outline of the offsets that were used to support this new program: I would generally characterize the kinds of offsets that were used as scholarship and grant funding in other areas that were specifically targeted to more limited use or limited numbers of students. So we made some decisions to move, generally speaking, from merit-based scholar-



ship funding, and a number of other programs which I'll go through, to needs-based funding through the Ontario tuition grant. That's the general sort of shift, I guess—and also recognizing that over time, the colleges and universities have been able to establish a significant number and range of merit-based scholarships as well as needs-based scholarships themselves, so we made some of the program offset decisions recognizing that the institutions themselves have been able to support students in those areas.

One of the offsets was the Ontario trust for student support, which had historically provided funds to colleges and universities to match donations from companies and individuals for endowments for students. A number of Ontario students had benefited from an average bursary of \$1,500—23,000 students, to be specific, as opposed to the 207,000 that benefited from the Ontario tuition grant in its first uptake.

The textbook and technology grant—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** How much was the value of that, Deputy Minister?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** The Ontario trust for student support was a \$25-million fund. The textbook and technology grant, which had provided \$150 to every full-time OSAP-eligible student attending one of our colleges or universities, to help with textbooks and technology-related costs, was used as an offset. That program has now been eliminated as well, and—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** How much was that?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** I don't have the total figure. I will make sure that my staff can correct me if I'm wrong. My recollection is it was worth \$37 million—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** —Thirty-nine point five million. I am corrected.

The Queen Elizabeth II scholarship program, which was a merit-based program for high school graduates who had the top marks at their school, had provided 8,000 new high school graduates with scholarships—and 6,000 returning students. It also included students with no financial need. If they had top marks, they got \$100 scholarships and—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm sorry. What was that?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** The Queen Elizabeth II scholarship included both students with and without financial need.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Right.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** It was based on academic performance in high school. There was a split between students who actually had financial need and those who did not. If you did not have financial need, the quantum of your scholarship was \$100 only, as compared to those with financial need, who received a higher scholarship.

That was worth \$20 million in 2012-13 to pay for the Ontario tuition grant, and recognizing year over year as—this is being phased out, so it's \$20 million in 2012-13, \$26 million in 2013-14, and \$31 million in 2014-15.

There was a Canada study grant, which was delivered on behalf of the federal government. We historically

found that there wasn't full uptake on that grant. It's for students with permanent disabilities and—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Which one was that again? Sorry.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** It's the Canada study grant. Because we looked at historical uptake on that grant, we determined that we could reduce the transfer payment budget to more accurately reflect the amount that was actually taken up of that grant.

There were some college consolidation forecast adjustments, and if we want to have a conversation about consolidation, I'll have to call a friend, because it's very technical, but we can certainly do that.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Do we have a global number on how much that saved?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** I do not, at the moment. Maybe when we get through the list, I can ask—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Sure.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** —either Nancy Naylor or David McIntosh to respond to that.

There were some savings in the employment and training division. Now we're getting into some naturally occurring savings that were realized due to lower-than-projected demand in some of our Employment Ontario programs. For example, for Second Career, we had forecasted a demand of 14,000 clients, and we actually served 12,700, so there were some natural savings there.

There were some natural savings in the post-secondary education division as well, based on slowing graduate enrolment growth—so, still committed to the same number of graduate enrolment spaces but over a longer period of time. We found there, again, that was \$15 million, and we were finding that the institutions weren't actually growing their graduate enrolment as quickly as we had forecast.

There were a \$2-million savings in collaborative nursing. There was a \$10-million savings just in terms of cash flow for capital projects. There was a small savings in our credit transfer initiative as it was rolling out.

There was actually some savings in our base forecast for OSAP because, again, there was actually lower-than-projected OSAP demand by students.

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There were automatic OSAP savings because there's an interaction between the Ontario tuition grant and OSAP, so that resulted in some savings as well.

As you can see, we took from quite a number of different areas. Some were actual programs. Some were naturally occurring savings, because there was a somewhat lower uptake or demand for some of our programs than we had forecast.

I think those were the primary sources of the offsets for the tuition grant.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The estimated budget was \$480 million for this program, as was stated, but I don't see \$480 million in offsets. I don't have the numbers for all of them, so perhaps some of the smaller ones end up adding up to a lot. But I'm just wondering where the other money came from.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** We would have to look year over year, certainly, as the program ramped up. As you know, the Liberal platform estimated the program at maturity would cost \$423 million, when it was fully mature. This was the first semester of its use, and essentially for a much shorter period of time and at a time when it's a new program, and the marketing and awareness of students—that's why we did try to create that level of awareness.

There was a 60% uptake of the program. Where we had estimated there would be 300,000 students who could potentially be eligible for the OTG, we got 207,000 of them actually applying for and receiving the grant.

The ramp-up in terms of the cost of the program is going to take some length of time. As the minister said, we can make different assumptions, going forward, about the level of uptake. It remains to be seen how much uptake there is in fact.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I would appreciate it if the ministry could provide us with the breakdown of the costs and with the offsets that have come with that, in some table, some format.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** We'd be pleased to provide that and undertake that grant.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Part of what we're trying to do is, a lot of these very small programs had very small numbers that could be eligible for them, and some of them—we have a plethora of programs, and we're so over-specialized that they were done at particular times to incent certain types of students, and they'd long been successful. I give the example of francophone students, who are now one of the fastest-growing groups by a factor of several-fold—not really a justification for that, but there's a real student-need issue.

Part of the other thing is, we also saved money because we built this on the back of the OSAP infrastructure. We didn't create a parallel bureaucracy to deliver this. It was delivered through our Thunder Bay operations, and most of it went right on, so the take-up was there. We predetermined the need because you have qualifications that you've got for OSAP.

The other thing is, it doesn't come to \$480 million—you'd be quite correct—because the offsets were offsetting to the demand right now. So we're pretty close to a reconciliation, if we haven't exceeded it, on the demand there.

As you know, we're going through some really fundamental discussions with the sector right now that I know many of you have expressed views on, around looking at higher levels of productivity through innovation in the post-secondary system. Some of those assumptions will be built into future budgets and for future discussions, as we get those results of those consultations.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Certainly, this was a commitment that your party made during the election. I think for a lot of students that have come and complained to members about not receiving it, it is because they all thought that they were going to get the 30%-off grant.

I'm wondering, Minister, if you could comment: Do you think students knew, ultimately, that you would be

taking away the Queen Elizabeth scholarship, the textbook grant, to finance this OTG? Do you think they knew that when they were making their voting decision at election time?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** That's sort of a hypothetical question I can't really answer because I wasn't in their brains. But one of the things I believe in, and I feel very strongly about, and I think most of my colleagues do, is that if you don't sunset programs—and none of these programs were established forever, in perpetuity—if you're not readjusting and replacing with better-quality programs, if your approach to government is simply to add cost ad infinitum, you're not going to manage. And I think that with some of the assumptions that we made on some of these programs, we're actually seeing better student performance, we're seeing students getting net more money in many cases, and we're moving towards a more universal program for people who meet a needs test rather than doing that. I think when you are in a period where you have more discretionary spending, you can try things like that.

I think this government has said, as we move forward with new programs, one shouldn't assume—and I think that would be a general rule of thumb for anyone in government at any level in this country today—that every time you do something new, you have to keep everything you do. I, when I was appointed minister, looked very carefully at these programs, made some determinations about whether there was need, whether students who were receiving money here could compete for money and more likely get it over there, and where was the real unmet need. Going forward, I am concerned about part-time and mature students, and I think there are other areas that we need to look at in coming years where there is still unmet need out there.

I don't think any of the programs that we are phasing out—and we're phasing them out with lots of notice—are negatively consequential. There's a net benefit. I'd much rather get \$1,600 to go to university than a \$150 textbook and technology grant, if I had the choice. And I think you cannot improve benefits for students unless you're prepared to phase out programs that were past their best-before date.

I think you and I share that view. I hope we do, and I think that's been pretty much the consistent behaviour of this government. So one shouldn't assume that. We continue to consult. We're in one of the largest consultations I think we've ever done—certainly in a very long time—in post-secondary education, and we're hearing from students about that. Every month I meet with each of the student associations at least once, and all of these things are on the table. So I don't think anything we're doing is coming as any big surprise to students.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The Queen Elizabeth grants were merit-based grants. What do you say to a student who received the Queen Elizabeth grant but does not qualify for the OTG? You're making a choice between need versus merit. What do you say to a student who has worked hard in school, who's done their best and re-



ceived a benefit from the government that the government has now taken away from them?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Because I think for students who are excelling in high school—and I think we all go to our high school grants. I'm amazed—I think there were over 100 students at Jarvis Collegiate who got merit-based grants. There are ample merit-based grants in our universities now; there is a lot. Finally, because we've been incenting it now through a policy for eight years, we're seeing the private sector step up.

I think one of the things that's really critical is that our students are paying a lot for their university and college education—a pretty competitively good deal compared to most American students, but they make a pretty good investment. It's one of the largest investments that most young people make, that most people make, is their tuition contribution.

We as a government keep on investing more. We've seen a huge increase in the amount of funding for post-secondary education from the government of Ontario on behalf of the people of Ontario. You simply cannot be all things to all people. I think when Jim Flaherty and Mark Carney put a call out to say, "Look, our corporations in Canada are sitting with some considerable reserves of funds as a result of federal and provincial fiscal policy, from all policies"—and I said this when I gave my speech at the Canadian Club; and I'll happily send it to you. I said that the third partner in all of this is the private sector. They benefit hugely from a highly skilled workforce. It's determined by economists, and one of the biggest reasons we're second only to California in direct foreign investment is because we have one of the highest-skilled workforces in the OECD.

We have to look in government today for partners outside of the taxpayers of Ontario and the students of Ontario to come to the table who are the other beneficiaries of this, and you see Joe Rotman, Mr. Schulich, and Jim Balsillie right now with the Balsillie school. We are starting to see the private sector come forward in a way that their peers in other jurisdictions are, and I think that's important.

So we know that—and we talk to private sector leaders—there is a greater appetite to put names on buildings and names on student scholarships for merit. We'll watch that. If we're wrong in that proposition and the evidence doesn't hold up—we're an evidence-based government—we'll review those things.

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But we think that students who are good students, the good B students as well as the A students, have to get a chance. We know that especially with larger families—a new demographic in Ontario—that was a need that the private sector or others were not going to step up and meet. We can't be all things to all people, so we chose our place, and our place was to meet unmet need, and it will continue to be, because there's still considerably more unmet need out there.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Minister, I certainly agree that the private sector needs to step up in endowments, but part of

the reason for doing that was the Ontario trust for student support. I know that my colleague Michael Harris from Kitchener-Conestoga has contributed to an endowment fund at Conestoga College on his own for that purpose. It was a way—certainly, the development people, the fundraising people at the colleges and universities loved it because of that, but it's now being taken away.

So you're now suggesting—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** You have one minute remaining, Mr. Leone.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** One minute?

You're now suggesting, Minister, that part of the way of encouraging private sector investment with the creation of this fund is now lapsed, which encouraged the private sector to contribute to funds that provide merit-based scholarships and grants. Again, I'm trying to get a sense of what the government's position is with a need-versus-merit student financial aid system.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It's our view, and I think it's pretty clear, that we want to make sure, as the government of Ontario, that we're making our very best efforts to deal with need. We have increased funding and re-directed funding. We're not just redirecting dollars. We're exceeding the amount of money that was there before, because we think, coming out of the worst recession—born in the United States, globally—that student need for the times has to be a higher priority.

Second of all, the other programs that we're investing in, that are in other ministries and other areas, are really critical. Pathways to Education, which I think last year we put an additional \$28 million into, has been one of the most successful programs not just in providing funding; it incents students to do well and complete high school. It means that by the time they get ready for college and university, they have considerable money in the bank. They get mentoring through that. I think Pathways to Education, which didn't start in government—it started in the community, out of Regent Park in my community—is a shining example of a much more innovative and dynamic approach to higher education funding than the scholarships. If you asked me if we would rather put greater amounts of money into Pathways to Education or continue the Queen Elizabeth scholarships, I've seen greater results, and I think most objective third party folks would do that.

If you say to me, and I think you've said it to this government, "Is it important to get back to balance?": Yes. Do you have to make some tough choices? Yes. If you want to meet unmet need, you just simply cannot increase government spending. We have to reduce government spending in some areas, and we have to reprioritize dollars that are existing to more effective, higher-value programs.

Balance: Queen Elizabeth scholarship, Pathways to Education; textbook and technology grant, 30% off. I think the choices we made are pretty clear, and I think they're generally good choices.

You could add too. I'm sorry; I don't want to cut my deputy off there.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** With your indulgence, quickly, Mr. Chair: Just to assure you, Mr. Leone, that any QEII scholarship recipients now will see their scholarship through to completion, so they're not losing any of their scholarship funding. It would be new graduates who will have received notice of the cancellation of the program.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you for the clarification. I'd like to now turn it over to the third party for 30 minutes.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to say for the record that I'm filling in for our critic, who couldn't be here today.

I want to make some statements, and then I'm going to ask you some questions, Minister. I appreciate the presentation you both made.

I want to say, just as a comment on things that I've heard, I know that the government has put \$6.2 billion in the Reaching Higher plan. I have to admit, I say with some irony that we have invested \$6 billion and we're still number 10 in per capita funding. So I often say to myself, "Imagine, if we had invested more money, where we would be." It's a pretty serious problem. Clearly, investments had to be made, and clearly we are not making the investments that we need to make.

I have to say I am profoundly worried about the state of affairs as it affects our students in particular. I know that access has increased; we know that. I'm not sure it's because of any government policies, to be fair—not because of what we did or what any other political party did. Because of pressure from parents, more and more students are going to colleges and universities. I think students are realizing that if they don't go to university or college, they're in trouble. Think of it: You need grade 12 to become a garbage person, man or woman. There was a time when you didn't need grade 12 to do that, and now you need a degree to do anything.

The problem with it is, as more and more students are realizing, that even with a four-year degree, they can't find good-paying jobs anymore. And that is a profound concern of mine. It's a profound concern of many young people who study with the expectation that they're going to do well economically, and their second expectation is that they're going to find work in their field. They're realizing, many of them, that they can't find work in their own field and that the jobs they do find don't pay very well.

What we know from the data is that salaries have, for the last 20 years, been flatlined, which is an incredible economic problem people are facing when you realize that homes are inaccessible to most human beings these days. If you want to live in downtown Toronto, you can't get a house for less than 800,000 bucks. In your riding, it's the same problem. And \$800,000 is probably the lowest that you would have to put into purchasing a home. Things are really getting seriously out of whack.

When you have growing inequality—because you've got two streams now; you've got the people at the very top and you have a growing middle class that's just slipping into the lower echelons of pay—that's going to

create a serious social instability in the future. When you've got salaries that are not increasing as they used to in the old days, and housing that's going through the roof, and other related prices for certain goods are shooting higher than most people's salaries, the question that we ask is, what do people do? When students graduate from university with an average debt of \$22,000, that's a huge problem for me—and for them.

If you are in a deregulated field, if you're going into law, it's \$20,000 a year just for tuition fees. If you're getting into medicine, it's 20,000 bucks, depending on the university you go to. Dentistry: It's the same thing. Engineering: It's the same problem. Business classes: In just a general business program, it's 8,500 or 9,000 bucks. It's insane. So if you're in a deregulated course or courses or field, and you want to be a doctor or a lawyer, your debt could be 80,000 to 100,000 bucks. And if you've got to go out of town, as you were saying, Minister, it's even more costly. What do people do?

You realize that some of these fields are just for the privileged folks. Mom or Dad is a lawyer or a doctor. Mom and Dad are going to pay for those tuition fees—God bless—and they're okay. But what we're noticing, since we deregulated tuition fees, is that a whole lot of people who used to go into those fields are not going in there as often or as much as they did, because it has become too expensive for them. So we're creating, through deregulation in particular—something you haven't done, I know, but through that deregulation we've caused serious social problems for a lot of people. And I'm not sure people have thought about that.

Unless they inherit money, young people are going to have a terrible future. Debts will be unsustainable. If they can't find work in their field, and if they can't find good-paying jobs, and their debt is \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000—and let's assume it's a heterosexual couple, the ones to marry, and they have children. They have to decide: "Do we have one child? Do we have two children? Can we afford a car? Where can we afford to live?" These questions are, of course, for everybody. It's becoming a big, big issue for people.

**1700**

How are we tackling the issue of debts? How are we raising the money for it, and how do people feel? How do they feel about the fact that we've been cutting corporate taxes for the longest time—and most governments have done it—and most of these corporations simply put that money away, sock it away? As Mr. Carney said, there is a great deal of dead money, about \$500 billion of dead money, that's not being spent.

We're giving all this money away, year after year, with the expectation that it's going to improve productivity. We know by all that we read in the *Globe and Mail* and other places—unless some of you read books—that productivity is not going up very much. It has in the last six months, but overall, it hasn't gone up, and we've been cutting corporate tax for 20 years.

We don't have money, yet we're giving it away, and then we leave this kind of problem for students that



they're incapable of dealing with in the very near future. I'm profoundly worried about the legacy we leave them.

I wanted to make those points by way of statements, because through some of the questions I have, you'll be able to respond to them. But this is my overarching worry, and unless we find ways of bringing back some revenue, we're in trouble.

I've got questions on tuition fees, but before I get to the tuition fees, I wanted to ask a question that just popped up in my mind about teachers, and perhaps you, Minister, or the deputy knows about this. How many teachers graduated as teachers last year? Do we know?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I don't.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Deputy, do you know?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** I'm not certain, Mr. Marchese. We'll have to get that number for you. What I would say is that we've reduced the number of funded teacher education spaces because there is such an over-supply of teachers in the labour force.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** That's the question I wanted to ask you, you see. The reason I'm asking is because there have been a number of teachers who have asked me, "How do I get on the supply list? I can't even get on the supply list. I can't even get an interview for a regular job." They can't even become supply teachers, because they can't get on the list. They can't even get an interview to do that.

The figure I have in my head is that 8,000 students graduate, or have been graduating, every year, which I think includes a number of teachers who get their degree outside of Ontario, but I could be wrong, and maybe the multitude of people who are behind you might have those numbers. I don't know.

But if that is true, I say to myself: Why don't we cut those numbers drastically? Because the hope we give to those students is that they're going to graduate and get a job, and year after a year, a lot of these students are not getting the jobs they're desperately looking for. Then what do you do, when you've invested so much time in that field, paying tuition fees, wanting to become a teacher and you can't, and you try desperately for a year or two to get in, and you can't get a job? What do you do? How do we respond to that?

Minister?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thanks. It's really tough. I always sort of think that the longer you're in politics, the more moderate you get, wherever you started from, and your empathy is built by the reality of what you have to confront. I think people get less ideological. I've always been torn by this, and I share your concern, very seriously and very sincerely.

Sometimes people get degrees not because they want to practise. Do you know what I mean?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Not in that field.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Yes, actually—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** But please go on.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Some people do. People go to Yale for law school. The general feeling is that Yale is a

theoretical law school; the practising law school is Harvard, in elite law schools in the United States.

I've had students who have said to me, "There's all kinds of things—I wanted to work in international development. I wanted to do this," you know.

Two of my staff have planning degrees as city planners. They wanted to do the degree. I will tell you right now, this is not a high-demand job for public sector city planners, but they really wanted to get the degree. And we do live in a free society where students do pay a lot.

One of the things the colleges do much better than the universities, because the universities don't see them as—in spite of teaching lawyers and teachers and dentists, which is very demand-driven employment, they don't provide—and this is one of the issues that has come up in the consultations: It's a question of how interventionist does government want to be here—the kind of labour market information that people want.

We have, probably, somewhere in the range of 8,000 to 9,000 people who now have teaching degrees for whom there is not really a teaching job because of the demographics of our society. Some of them want to teach overseas. There are very aggressive border states where American universities are doing that.

I have to dissuade some university presidents from certain regions of the country, who say, "You know, we're not producing teachers in our neighbourhood. We have to produce more teachers in the north. You should let us expand these programs." So there's a whole bunch. But I agree with you. We have moved with the Council of Ontario Universities. We've had very candid conversations with the university presidents that we expect them to be de-emphasizing teaching right now. We expect them to be increasingly clear with students who are applying to educational faculties that, if they're looking to get a teaching degree because they want to be a teacher, the next five-year cycle is probably not one that is going to generate a lot of jobs anywhere in Canada right now. Given the demographic changes, it's not unique to Ontario.

Those are some of the challenges we have, but I would be very interested in your advice here, because I have a whole bunch of students who are taking off for Africa who wanted to get their teaching degrees because they want to work in international development.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** And I think that's true, in some cases. I know that many people become lawyers and use their law degree for something else. I think that's true.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** A few people in our profession, yes.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** And some of them become politicians and Premiers, this is true, and haven't practised very much. This is true, too.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Presidents of the United States, I hear, as well.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Quite a number, yes.

But in teaching, I suspect that most of them who get a teaching degree want to teach—I can guarantee it—with the exception of a few.

But the few who travel out of country to teach somewhere else—I don't know how many there are. Maybe the deputy has numbers; I don't know. But I suspect the majority would want to teach here and only a few end up going out of the country—which wouldn't be a bad idea to do, by the way.

I wanted to follow up on your comment about your discussions with presidents and de-emphasizing teaching as an option. My point is, why don't we just reduce the number of teaching spots? You were getting at the fact that you've made some reductions. First of all, what is the number? Secondly, I truly believe that rather than de-emphasizing teaching—because I think a lot of people want to become teachers, but many won't be able to qualify and there's going to be a selection process. So if you reduce it from 8,000 to 4,000 or 4,500, that may not be such a bad thing.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We are in the process of doing that. It is a stepping-down process, but I'll turn it over to the deputy. It is a substantial number, but I'm not sure of the exact—I know we are still in negotiations with them. As you know, every university has its own separate legislation, and as much as the minister would like to have much more direct levers attached to some of these institutions, sometimes—it reminds me of being a mayor. You have convening and controlling abilities in some of these cases.

I'll be quite frank with you. One of the things that we are managing is, we want to manage direction in the universities and get them to respond without hurting students. There's one grey history in Canada, that sometimes universities will respond to fiscal direction that will end up penalizing students. It's very hard for us, then, to direct them to spend money exactly the way we want it to. We may say, "Look, we're reducing dollars here"; they may not do that. That's a challenge, and this is one of the things—and I'll be looking for support from all parties. I think this a completely nonpartisan issue.

This has come up from students and faculty, interestingly, as well as management: What is the accountability and how much of a role should we have over universities? We have much more control over colleges' budgets, and colleges are much more engaged and compliant in meeting employment outcomes—no problems there.

I have suggested, and I could really use the support of my colleagues in this Legislature, to say to universities, "You have to be much more accountable to students for labour market outcomes." We're on the same page on that.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** On that, I agree.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'll let the deputy talk a little bit about some of the financial tools that we're using right now. Just so you know, our challenge isn't a hesitation to act. Our hesitation is to make sure that we're not penalizing students because we had a good intention that led us to a bad outcome for students.

1710

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Very good. Deputy?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** Thanks very much, Minister and Mr. Marchese, for that question. Last year, we consulted extensively with our sister ministry, the Ministry of Education, to really try to get at accurate projections of the demand in the labour market for teachers. We know that there is an oversupply of teachers, so we were working with the Ministry of Education—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Go ahead, Deputy. Sorry.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It's okay. The rest of us are House followers. We understand that.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** I was saying that we worked with the Ministry of Education to try to come to agreement on what the right number of reduced teacher education spaces would be, and through a process of various projections and labour market demand, we identified a number—which my staff are going to provide to me momentarily—of the number of funded teacher education spaces that the ministry would support. We have a number of our universities providing teacher education. We allocated a reduction in funded spaces across the various teacher education programs.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Right, and you didn't give a figure for what that reduction is.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** Yes, we did, institution by institution, and that's the figure that I'm waiting for. We did consider the oversupply in the market and the disappointment of graduates who are unable to teach. I think you're absolutely right: People take teaching because they really want to teach. I think in general we know that post-secondary education graduates do well in the labour market, so you apply whatever your training or program was to different areas, and I'm certain teachers do that too. But your point is correct.

The other thing that we did do was review the length of teacher education programs and determine that Ontario was one of the only jurisdictions with a one-year teaching program. We're in the process of introducing a two-year teacher ed program, which will have the effect of reducing the number of teachers as well.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Can I ask you a question? In that regard, if you're going to have a two-year program, is it your sense that students with a three-year degree would be just as good to become teachers, or do you believe that they need their four-year degree plus the two years in the teaching colleges?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It's a good question. The thing about the two-year degree isn't so much the length of it; it's the content of it. This has been a big discussion with teachers' unions, students, recent graduates. It gets back to what is education today, because this is a very dynamic conversation. If we think about experiential learning as the things that go on in our neighbourhoods, Rosario, the member for Trinity-Spadina, like the digital media zone, where all these very smart kids—well, they're adults, I guess—are starting their own businesses, making more money than you and I probably together in our lifetimes by the time they graduate. It's quite extraordinary, the platform they've got. But experiential learn-



ing for teachers is the second year is to be classroom- and experience-based. That's been driven by a number of things, because school boards, teachers, mentors, principals, get a better sense of the teachers when they have some classroom experience. It gives people a better sense of whether they want to do that.

In a lot of our schools, you're teaching very complex challenges today. We have spectrums of autism now. Autism is almost an epidemic in Canadian society. You're dealing with the most complex multicultural, multifaith society in the world, so you're dealing with a sensitivity about identity issues. Kids are coming out of the closet at 12 and 13. The experiential learning part is not just to deal with the technical, but also to deal with the humanity and complexity of it. I think it was a wise move to do that. It was less about the additional time, but to move to sort of theory, classroom-based for one year and then move into an experiential year. We're trying it. We'll see how it works. I think one of the collateral benefits of it may be that it will slow down the demand for teaching and slow down the process to put a little bit of brake on the system in doing so. That's the kind of thinking behind it, if that's helpful.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Very likely. I just want to say that for a lot of teachers, that one year at the faculty simply isn't very adequate in terms of learning all that one needs to know about students. I know that my daughter went through the early childhood education program; she's a teacher now at the elementary level. She knows so much more than I think most of us who went through that one-year degree do. There's a lot to be said about how much teachers need to know to be able to teach the multiple learning styles that we have as people, as students. Unless we deal with that, we're going to have problems, because we won't be able to reach a lot of kids.

I want to talk about Pathways to Education briefly, because I'm a big supporter of that program. I think I asked the previous minister this, but I don't remember. You spent \$25 million, I think, at one point, and then you increased it, but I don't remember by how much. I truly believe that this is prevention. If it works so well, as I believe it does, why aren't we investing serious, serious money into that? Because I think \$25 million or \$30 million—whatever we're spending—is a drop in the bucket, when it comes to how you're able to take students who are likely going to fail and make them succeed with the efforts and the supports that are put into this program. Why aren't we expanding it to the fullest possible extent so that we can keep more and more students in school?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We are. This is not my ministry, so I'm saying this with hesitation, but I think closer to \$30 million was the second investment just a few months ago.

I'm quite close to it because it was born out of the neighbourhoods I represent. My understanding of it is that it's not just a government program, as you know. This is a true partnership, and it is the capacity of our partners to do that. It is also important to them in their approach and their philosophy, which I also endorse, that

they're not entirely dependent on government to do this; this is bringing the private sector in, and it's bringing the community sector in. Having worked in the not-for-profit sector, I always liked to make sure that my revenue sources were diverse, because you can very easily become a not-for-profit that becomes a branch of government if you're too dependent on it.

I can't speak for them, but this government has responded, I think, very generously to all of the demands that have been placed on it.

In a very non-partisan way, I would be happy to work with you. This is a program that you and I share a great passion for, and I appreciate your advocacy for it. It's important.

But those are some of the dynamics behind it. I'll certainly discuss this with my colleagues in cabinet who are responsible for supporting that, but it has certainly been something that has been nurtured, grown and that, and I totally agree with you.

I was recently up in Timmins meeting with some of the First Nations folks who were proposing some similar different partnerships for post-secondary education—different because if you're in Attawapiskat, for example, where I was meeting with Chief Theresa, the context has to be a little bit different, and the dynamics are substantially different. You have to be sensitive to a different set of potential partners.

But I think this is something that this government is very committed to and something that you and your colleagues in the third party, in the NDP, are very committed to, and I hope this is something we can explore.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I only asked you because you raised it. I know it's not in your portfolio—

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, no. If I had an unlimited budget, you know—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Except that one of the things that we can do well in committee is that we can talk about things that work well; whereas when we do the politics, it doesn't work as well.

But we know this is prevention. Prevention happens in the early years; later on, it becomes much more complex to solve problems that have been ingrained for 18 years—but that's another thing. We could talk about everything, I mean.

I have some questions around tuition fees.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Could I just—sorry to interrupt. The deputy can answer your question now about the teacher ed spaces.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** Thanks very much. Before the reduction, the number of teacher ed spaces was 9,906 at 10 universities. We reduced them by 885 spaces. Of that 9,906, we took 885, so they're now capped at 9,021 spaces.

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**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Wow.

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** We're continuing to monitor that with the Ministry of Education, together with the introduction of the two-year program, to see what the impact is in terms of supply and demand in the labour market.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Oh, there will be an impact. I guarantee it. I know that you know that, too.

Anyway, I'm glad that we're having this conversation. Hopefully, the next time we meet, there will be follow-up on that particular part of it.

The recent *Falling Behind* report of the Ontario Common Front released last week pulls together some stats on the cost of post-secondary education. The report says, "While across Canada universities are relying increasingly on private income sources—primarily tuition fees—to fund university operations Ontario's record is worse than the rest of Canada."

Based on the Canadian Association of University Teachers' figures, the report says that operating revenue from government sources has declined from 84% to less than 58% in Ontario over the past 20 years, and the percentage of funding from tuition fees has risen from 12% to 35%.

The *Falling Behind* report indicates that both undergraduate and graduate tuition fees were the highest of any province in Canada, 2011-12. Is that consistent with the ministry data?

**Ms. Deborah Newman:** Yes.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Certainly that we have higher fees is really—I just want to try—because you raised a lot of things in your questions and issues in your preamble. Right now, per student funding from university and college has gone from \$6,700 in 2003 to about \$8,643. For college, it's up from \$4,500 to \$6,298. Those are substantial. But what's interesting—and this is one of the questions I have. I go through every institution in Ontario and I look at the history of their budgets. The University of Ottawa in 1995: a budget of \$160 million. It had the exact same budget in 2002. It now has a budget of \$305 million. The University of Toronto has seen one of the smallest increases percentage-wise. It's gone from \$387 million in 2002 to \$640 million. It was \$404 million in 1995. Ryerson has gone from \$73 million to \$191 million. York didn't change from 1995 to 2002, \$186 million to \$196 million—it's \$306 million.

I've gone through every university and college budget since 2003, and they are up 60%, 100%. UOIT is approaching a 400% increase. The capacity that's been built—so per student subsidies have gone up faster than they've gone up in probably 30 or 40 years. We have seen a dramatic expansion of funding for universities after about 13 or 14 years where there was actually a net decline—and I don't mean a net decline inflation-adjusted; I mean without inflation-adjusted, there's a net decline. So we are still rebuilding from what was the biggest drought in university and college funding.

Are we near where we should be yet? We're getting closer, but we're not. One of the things that I have to ask—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** One minute of the NDP's time remaining.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** —is, let's start looking at the money we're spending—one of the things I'm hearing from students—and start to get better outcomes, because when I sit down with university presidents and say,

"What do you do with the \$6.2 billion?" I'm not happy with the answers. When I sit down with college presidents, I see much more affordable tuition; I see much more student-centred learning.

I'm really looking to universities, and one of the things we're going to be asking for, as we approach this fall, is greater transparency in the dollars that we're giving and more accountability, because I think that the assumption that government isn't spending enough on universities is one that I can understand some out there like to make. I'm not sure it rings true with the facts, and I think that part of it is the level to which we as a government want to be gauged with universities about establishing how important the dollars are that we give them going to meet student need as opposed to other priorities. I'm looking forward and hoping I have your support in that effort.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Minister. The third party's time is up. You now have 30 minutes to continue your comments, if you so desire.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I greatly appreciate that. First of all, I want to thank you—both excellent questions. Some of the issues that you raised, I think, are ones that are shared on all sides of the House.

The challenge I think we have going forward—there are a couple. One is, if we go back to the 2008 number, we get 92% of university grads being employed within six months, 94% within two years; 84% of them being employed within or in a field very close to their graduation. For my friend from Trinity-Spadina, I humbly and respectfully disagree with you. I think the actual case is that people who do get to university are doing very well in employment, especially that kind of take-up to get into your field.

If you are sweeping floors at St. Mike's and you go to George Brown and you get into the culinary program or you get into one of their business management programs and you're back sweeping floors at St. Mike's six months after graduation, I would agree with you; that's a problem.

I look at my staff in the minister's office. One of my staff is 22 years old. He did an accounting degree at Ryerson while his parents are still learning English. To say he comes from a modest-income family would probably be accurate, maybe a bit of an understatement, and here, in one generation, he's working in my office; I can't tell you—especially for today, having someone who has an accounting degree. Now, if I asked him, "Did you really want to be an accountant?"—I'm not sure.

I've got one person who has a master of social work and a degree in planning, who ran my constituency office and was a transformational community organizer who not just housed out individuals, but the kind of organizing work that she's done in St. James Town and Regent Park to help get people there organized to change their lives is something that now—you know what constituency assistants get paid, so you can imagine how appreciative I am of someone who has two university degrees from the University of Toronto.



We're living in a dynamic world where people do not always get degrees in the middle of a field. Now, if you're in dentistry, I'm going to take a guess that you want to be a dentist. Unless you want to be a drug dealer, I'm going to guess that if you're a pharmacist, you probably want to be a pharmacist. I agree with you that there are some professions that are more A to B. But we're living in a society now where critical thinking skills that people are comfortable with is really kind of interesting.

I would invite all of you—and I mean this really sincerely; this isn't a partisan shot or anything. I've often thought it would be really kind of fun to organize a tour for us, to get a whole bunch of MPPs and go down and see what Joe Kim is doing at McMaster. Here's a guy who's taking dollars and saying, "Can I get more outputs from the dollars that my department gets and get greater outcomes?" The psychology department at McMaster got into this approach of, "What is surface learning versus deep learning?"—do you know what I mean?

I think we all took courses at some point in our educational life where we got really good at figuring out what was going to be on the exam and what you had to study to get the multiple choice questions right, or what you could focus on to write that paper. There are a lot of good people—Ian Clark, Joe Kim, many across the sector—who are saying, "We have to get into deep learning." The value of a university or college education is not just: Do people get content? Do they really understand the content and do they have deep critical thinking skills?

Joe Kim now uses online learning, mentoring, problem-based learning and classroom learning for classes of 400 students. If you go out and talk to those students, it's completely different than any other classroom experience. The per-dollar cost of delivering that program is a fraction of what the sage-on-the-stage model is. The quality outcomes are so excellent that Stanford University has hired him and the psychology department at McMaster University to redesign their undergraduate education. This is an Ontario leader.

There's an adjunct professor at the University of Toronto who's a lead researcher for Microsoft. He has now pioneered something that he's working with MIT and the University of Texas, Austin, because you know that MIT, outside of Canada, is one of the best universities in engineering and information technology. The University of Texas, Austin, is famous for its design school and fine arts school. Students want to take the best. He said that where education is moving in the United States in elite universities is that they don't have their own students. Students are students of a system. This is one of the profound challenges that many of our faculty and our students are putting to university and college leadership: "We're getting an education and we need to get a mix that's relevant for our own personal development, our literacy, our ability to participate as informed and literate people in a civil society."

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I go out to Western university and I'm sitting, meeting with students. What was the thing that came up? "Well, we go to Fanshawe and we go to Western." I said, "How

does that work?" They talked about which courses they take and why they like to take some courses at Fanshawe, which are more technical courses which help them with their employment, but they also need the theoretical courses at Western university that they can't get at Fanshawe. Students in London now, and I'm told this is a very rapidly increasing demand, don't find satisfaction at either institution individually, but they can put together a high-value education.

My friend Sheldon Levy at Ryerson just did something really interesting. He decided he wanted to find out the values of self-directed online education, so he went online and took a 200 genetics course from a consortium of British universities that have online education. I said to him, "Sheldon"—all of us know Sheldon Levy; he's no wallflower and is very clear about his opinions on things. We were sitting over a coffee, and he said, "Jeez, you know, it was one of the richest learning experiences. You had access online to multiple lectures, embedded videos. I had interactive chat rooms I could go into. I had access to hard data. But the one thing I missed is, I didn't have a classroom experience." I said, "Could you produce that kind of genetic lecturing and experience from those world leaders?" He said, "I don't think anyone in this field has that kind of expertise. This is a cluster of researchers and faculty in England that just simply is one of the best in the world." I said, "What's stopping you?" There are 100,000 students, I think he said, if I can remember correctly, that were on. He said the cost of that per student is very inexpensive. "Why don't you do what basically Joe Kim is doing, which brings that rich content in from a world expert and then you do the mentoring in the classroom, you do the report writing, you do the experiential learning? You go down to the centre for structural genomics, where we have Dr. Aled Edwards and some of these folks and you add on to that online content that we couldn't afford—and why would we recreate it?—the highest-value components that you described."

When you look at Harvard edX, when you look at what Stanford is now doing, when you look at Western Governors University—my friend Kevin Flynn over there, the MPP for Oakville, just did his MBA at Athabasca in Alberta, which is really quite an accomplishment. But he's doing what most professionals are doing: You have to do a full-time job and you have to upskill yourself. That's tough and we all know that. We're particularly sensitive about that when we hold an elected office, how quick it is, when we've been away from the things we all did before we came here, to get out of touch. We have to find ways to serve our public and maintain our employability for the possibility of less-than-desirable election outcomes sometimes, so we might be more sensitive to parts of the population.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, but that's true, because it's a shifting economy. We have to reskill and reinvent ourselves. Sending 55-year-old steelworkers from Hamil-

ton back to a traditional classroom sometimes isn't the best way.

What we're trying to do—and I think this is a very positive kind of experience. How do we create post-secondary education—and when I say “we” I don't just mean us as politicians. I think this is a very passionate conversation going on with academics, university leaders, students and faculty. How do we create these different pathways to education? Because maybe for MPP Flynn, the online course really works very well. Maybe for someone who wants to do musical dance, musical theatre, it's pretty hard to do that kind of thing online, so how do we design programs that are more centred around student learning and student services? This is the biggest challenge to post-secondary education since we built the colleges, and we built the colleges because we had rampant industrial and service expansion of our economy in the 1960s and 1970s and our universities weren't well enough positioned to do that kind of skills-based education. So we invented colleges. I think at the time it was absolutely viewed as a horrible mistake. The headline in the *Toronto Star* of the day—when the first college, Centennial, opened its doors, it was called “Dropout U.” You look at Centennial today and it's got a partnership with Bombardier. It and the University of Toronto are now turning out aerospace engineers and high-skilled jobs which are the envy of most colleges and post-secondary institutions.

Where we're going forward—and I always think that we're living in a world right now where I don't care what your income is, your race is, what your partisan affiliation is. We're living in a world where people expect us to be Ontarians first and citizens of this planet first. The issues that we're dealing with, whether they're environmental, are existential right now. If we don't start fixing some of the changes going on in our natural environment, if we can't get the skill sets to young people that are relevant in time, we're going to leave our kids with some very ugly choices that we can avoid right now.

I got into this and I think, when I've talked to each of you personally, we all got into this because we really do believe in public service. One of the things that I love about this ministry and my relationships with many of you in the Legislature is that this is really a public service calling that we can get.

The challenges, and this is where I have some disagreements with our friends who did that report you mentioned, CFS and—I will never pretend for a second there aren't really financial and economic barriers out there, but when you look at the broad spectrum of incomes of who is actually going to Ryerson and who is actually going to George Brown, they are pretty reflective of the diversity of low-income families and modest-income families.

What we're finding—and the University of Ottawa is doing some very good research in this area—is that the cultural barriers are more pernicious and difficult to overcome to get people into that. If families have a

library card, if their parents got magazines in the House, read books, those kids are much more likely to go to university and college, and if that wasn't the condition in the family, those kids are much less.

One of the things that I'm hoping that we do as we move forward on this review, as we consult—and I want to thank my deputy and our team. This is where I think we all need to work together. How do we start to remove those cultural barriers, because they're a lot more difficult than simply increasing a grant. Do you know what I mean? They're not things that are easily solved.

Who is really left out? One of the things that particularly concerns me, again, especially for our northern members, and I include the Chair in this, is we've got some real challenges with First Nations people. I have an aboriginal name—“Niiganiishgam”—and an eagle feather because I spent about 10 years of my life in civic politics, I think with some great success, trying to support some transformation amongst First Nations folks. Half the population is under 25, and their participation rate from coast to coast to coast in Canada isn't sufficient for them to fully participate in the fruits of our economy and our society.

So how do we start to address those kinds of issues in a really meaningful way, especially in northern and remote communities? I'm hoping, as we go through the estimates, that these are the kinds of things that we can look at. We have a lot of work to do there and we've got to find models going forward that address increasingly those kinds of concerns. For the students who get into university, they are getting jobs and they're getting jobs at a rate. The students who are getting into university are more reflective of a broad socio-economic class than in many, many generations.

The capacity in the system is greater than it has been in a very long time. We've added the equivalent of three University of Torontos to the university and college system in less than a decade, if you think about how hard it is to actually build an institution or that kind of capacity.

We also have a more diverse university and college system, which I'm very proud of. You know, the days when you would drop out in high school to go and work on the GM line are gone. Innovation now drives, even more than production, our economy. So you now go to UOIT and you study robotics, you study software development for the auto sector and you go from UOIT with a degree on to the new electronics transmission plant in St. Catharines. That's a very different kind of thing.

Part of our challenge, I think, is that those kids who are disaffected, those young folks who are disaffected, who come out, are lost. One of the things that we're looking at with our colleges—Rob MacIsaac, who is the president of Mohawk, and Patrick Deane at McMaster, have raised this issue. I think that with this review that we're doing, where we're focusing more on outcomes, not so much on just simple enrolment expansion, is now coming out with really collaborative partnerships be-



between universities and colleges about how we meet that student to avoid them doing that victory lap in high school and actually get them connected to something, and the number, whether it's self-directed or experiential learning. If universities sort of start to think about erasing the walls a bit and becoming much more extroverted and connected with young people, more in their life-planning—not just in simply, “Do you want to be a dentist or do you want to be an accountant?” I think that's really important. And how do we create that?

Broad undergraduate education is really interesting right now, how it's changing. The Australians and Europeans have completely restructured their undergraduate education—completely. It doesn't even look the same anymore. There are 49 countries that have just signed an agreement that has redesigned undergraduate education and set international credentials and accreditation. Canadian universities have not yet fully engaged in that. One of the important questions coming to us is: How do we engage with this new American system, with this new Singapore system, with a new Australian system when every European country has done that? Do we want to differentiate ourselves? In what ways do we do that, and how do we do that in a meaningful kind of way?

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It is also, I think, part of our agenda that we're going to have to spend smarter in government. The productivity challenge that my friends from Cambridge and Trinity-Spadina both pointed out is a very real one. Our productivity gap with the United States, in every single province now, is about 25%. If we closed that gap, it would be about \$6,000 in folks' pockets. The investments in education and technology and research, which this government is driving as a huge priority, are to meet that.

It's hard to quantify that to people, to understand that this is one of the most important measures in actually giving Ontario families more discretionary income in a very, very real way, because it's not writing a cheque and it's not doing that kind of thing. But we know that's a very, very real challenge. Don Drummond and Roger Martin have been beating that drum. We've read more—I mean, *Toronto Life* had a wonderful exposé on that.

I say that the priority to keep investing in education, to keep getting those skill sets up in young people, is as important an economic issue as it is an education or social issue, and that is really, really critical.

The last point—well, it's probably not the last point, but another point I want to make—is around graduate education as well. We have extraordinary success in graduate education. It is growing now after being, relative to other jurisdictions, somewhat depressed, and in the last seven or eight years, we've seen some real expansion in it.

One of the things that we're looking at is the length of time that it takes to complete a Ph.D. or a master's degree right now. I think one of the things that I'm hoping we'll have some support on is, as we open up the data and start to look at that, can we start to get a better performance for students in the amount of time it takes to complete a

degree, and that we're meeting a reasonable test, a comparative test, about what the turnaround times are in those areas.

The platforms for technology are quite extraordinary. If you look at Algonquin College right now, it is one of the global leaders in online education and self-directed education. It has taken most of its students and programs there. Contact North has been advancing the student portal, which I think most of us know is particularly important in northern and remote communities. But as my friend from Trinity-Spadina pointed out, how do you actually provide the capacity in smaller communities, going forward, to meet the needs? You can't simply—a phone line and a laptop, while really important in providing really high-quality education—we need to look at the kinds of things that we've done in Kenora, which is where we have a good centre, where people can go in physically. They can come in to a community which is in a more remote part of Ontario. They can get those services. We're really looking at: How do we deliver that? How do some of the dividends of that more productive online education system appear? Because there is a physical presence to that as well.

The other challenge I think that we have is, how do we start to build out things like the digital media zone, where you now have American companies—and we were talking a little bit earlier about the importance of private sector partners. You mentioned, I think, CAUT. Part of the challenge that we have is, some universities have been very good at attracting private capital and investments without any problem. I don't think anyone has a problem with the Rotman School, the Schulich School or the Munk Centre. I think what Janice Gross Stein has done at U of T is exceptional. I don't think anyone is saying that. But getting very, very clear rules—Professor Homer-Dixon at Waterloo wrote a very good paper, which I hope we're all paying attention to, on what the conditions are that universities should lay down for private sector investment.

I'm spending a lot of time right now with the college of Ontario universities and with others, saying, “You folks have to step up to the plate.” If we want private sector dollars—I don't think those things are driving that. I think that we have to make sure that we have conditions in our colleges and universities where we have a good, reasonable, ethical standard, and I think there are good practices for that.

There are a lot of things which the private sector benefits from. You look at the partnerships in Communitech, Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. I think for faculty members at Laurier and at Waterloo who are involved in Communitech—because you go in there and there are Waterloo students and Laurier students wall to wall. Communitech now produces one new start-up company every single day, I'm told by Iain Klugman. That's just exceptional. I don't think there's an incubator in the world right now that I'm aware of—there may be a few—in a community of that scale and size that has that kind of take-up. MaRS is doing very, very well.

Also, the whole area of social innovation: You look at things like common ground. Our social work schools aren't about creating dependency anymore; they're working on social entrepreneur platforms. So you've got MaRS, 401 Spadina.

We now have programs where we have folks out there who, with developmental disabilities, were never employable or trainable and are now in programs where they're actually running their own bakeries, running their own coffee shops. This idea that there are people who cannot learn in our system is really understated.

My friend Anne Abbott—if you ever want to see an extraordinary experience—whose interest is art, has the use of one single finger—one finger. If you go to the north end of St. Lawrence Market on a Saturday—if you ever get a card from me, you'll see it's her card. Here's someone who has the use of one finger whose fine arts abilities are enough for her to start her own business, and she operates that. We might not think—while we want everybody to go off and get something that sounds incredibly employable, this woman's passion for art has overcome a disability where she runs a very successful business making cards.

As you look at employment and training, what we're trying to do is really look at every individual as having potential and not seeing what is limited. We have a lot of the folks who have been chronically unemployed—people like Anne, people with developmental disabilities—of whom we have just simply said, "Well, those folks can be on ODSP." I think that one of the things that is changing dramatically today, and I'm very proud that this ministry is doing, is that we are looking at the ability of everybody, not the disability of anybody to do that. That is very demanding in a post-secondary system. It is very demanding for colleges and for universities to create the kinds of facilities and the kinds of places where those students can get into it, because a barrier-free, universally designed college and university system is almost what you need right now if you actually want to place value on everyone's life and see everyone as employable.

If you look at the range of people who are going in, our student debt levels that you raised earlier—thanks; that's what I was trying to find. Student debt levels in 1999 were just over \$21,000; today, they're just over \$21,000. They've been pretty consistent. For two-year students, they were \$12,000 in 1999; they're \$12,000 today. For one-year students, they've been hovering around the \$8,000, \$9,000 mark. While we've made those investments in education—we've doubled student aid now, and it was halved by a previous government—we are not seeing rising student debt levels, which I think some people have imagined.

Part of the challenge we have going forward is, how do we look at affordability in higher education? If you go to Osgoode, you're going to pay \$23,000 in tuition, as you would in any excellent law school. Unless you're a really bad lawyer, you're probably going to be making about six figures when you get out there, so your capacity

to pay back a student loan is much greater than, let's say, someone who's going to a dental hygiene school, who's not paying much less than that but isn't going to be making a six-figure salary. But you've got a \$400,000 unit that you have to buy for every dental hygiene student. It's one of the most expensive programs—early childhood education. One of the things that we have to look at going forward is affordability, not just on what it costs to get in, but affordability, coming out the other end, on how people can pay for it. Elite MBA programs right now at Schulich or Ivey or Queen's are very important programs. There's a huge business investment that's often made by large banks and large companies into people getting those kinds of degrees.

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A lot of these things are not as simple as they used to be when you lived in an economy where—many of us in this room, I'm guessing, went to university or college—a small minority of people went to university or college. One of the things that we're dealing with in the discussion paper is that—and I'm sure you've read about this. Mamdouh Shoukri, at York, tells me all the time, "We're as research-intensive a university as Queen's, but we also have to educate about 40,000 general students every year generally for an economy." We're really in one of the first decades where we're in an economy of mass education, where we've built our colleges to be skills-based and technical-based colleges to provide very market-savvy, market-labour kinds of technical skills employment for real jobs. They're very hard-wired, and I think our colleges have done a very good job. They're even going forward to actually bringing the classroom now to the plant floor or the workplace. Literally, they're teaching on-site right now and using the workplace as the laboratory, as the skill-sets builder.

Our universities have become institutions of mass education, and that creates some real questions for them, because if you are an elite, research-intensive university without that mass education, it's a lot easier. You focus entirely on graduate work and research, and you produce a lot of Ph.D.s and a lot of master's. If part of your mission is to take your research-intensive staff and repurpose them for mass education, it's much more challenging.

When I go back to the kinds of things that McMaster is doing, or what Queen's is doing right now with its commerce students, they are redesigning their undergraduate education so they can deploy their research-intensive, high-profile faculty—that people want to have an association with—into classes of 300, 400 students and giving them a more intimate kind of learning experience.

How do we now think about funding? How do we now think about our strategy going forward to provide a very broad platform for innovation in higher education? We don't have any quick answers for that, but I think we have to appreciate how different it is. You don't have to leave home to go to university anymore. My son, your son or daughter, can now go to their bedroom, open up



their laptop and take a course on Harvard edX for free—for free. What's happening in universities and colleges in the United States now is, they're taking that course content and they're giving the degree. "Don't pay Harvard. Just take Harvard's content, and we'll build it into the commerce degree at Milwaukee state university or Wayne State University of Detroit, and we'll charge you \$10,000 a year at Wayne State and we'll start using content." How do we in Ontario want to start dealing with content produced in other places, especially if it's produced at some of the most elite American and British universities, and students are doing it?

Students are using this also, because if they're taking a law program at Osgoode or at U of T law school, you can bet your bottom dollar that, for free—they're figuring out what the equivalent course is at Harvard and getting some of the best—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Minister, you have one minute remaining.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'm sorry. They have some of the best faculty at Harvard and at Yale that they can take the same kind of course from. Do you know what I mean?

I'll finish this: The minister in BC, at the last CMEC meeting, raised this issue of: How do we start to protect open-source education from being charged for, and protect access to it, and how do we look at content knowledge?

I think these are very exciting times to be into that, because not since Bill Davis and Bette Stephenson introduced colleges in the 1960s and 1970s because of a dynamically different economy have we seen such a change in our society, where technology is opening so any different doors to so many different pathways for us to create better learning opportunities for our children.

I will look forward in the coming days to discussing more of that with you. Thank you for your patience and for your collegiality today. You were gentle with me, and I want to thank you for that.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Minister. We have five minutes remaining. Would you like to start or would you like—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Five minutes is five minutes.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Rob wants his five minutes.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Go ahead.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** There's a reason for that, Rosie, and that's the reality that we're losing time on estimates to get through all our ministries, so I'll take five minutes where I can get it. I apologize if I'm keeping everyone here for an extra five minutes.

I just wanted to pick up on—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** They brought us back two weeks early.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I guess, yes.

The comments about the McMaster example of Professor Kim I think are instructive. I went to McMaster. I started my undergraduate degree in 1998. My wife

started at McMaster as well. She actually did a psychology degree at McMaster.

I think the concept that Professor Kim is building upon was first developed by Professor Day at McMaster, where they had this ability to educate thousands of students in a very efficient way. I think he's harnessing information technology in very important ways in the example that you cited.

The problem, I think, is that while we have a few Professor Kims out there, there are many, many other professors who don't have the skills, don't have the ability, don't have the desire to engage in harnessing online techniques, Internet techniques, in terms of developing and delivering their courses.

The great question, I think, that we face is: How exactly do we meet that challenge? How do we meet that challenge where we have professors who are the sage on the stage, as you like to suggest, who have done that for 30 or 40 years, and we're now putting them in an environment today where we're saying, "You need to have some online component. You have to use your desire to learn suites of software to help deliver your course material"? How do we get to that stage where the Professor Kims aren't the exception but the norm?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I couldn't agree with you more. That is the challenge.

One of the things that exists—someone will correct me if I'm wrong, I hope, but I think in almost every college and university we have teaching and learning centres where we actually teach and help faculty learn how to be better teachers. Part of it is doing what we're doing right now, and we've shared this, through the strengthening that is really—part of the focus of that is, how do you take what are very prudent and thoughtful institutions, ones that don't often promote change very easily, universities—having spent three years at U of T helping them build the Cities Centre, it's very hard to manage change in some of these very large institutions. The culture of embracing risk for change is not easy.

Part of the way we're doing that is, every institution in Ontario will have a mandate letter. As you probably know, they have to submit those by September 30. The real focus point of those mandate letters is, over the next five to 10 years, how are you going to innovate? How do you meet student need? How do you do that?

When we did the round tables across Ontario, Professor Kim and probably a dozen other faculty members who, I think you and I would agree, are really producing high-quality education outcomes, and doing that in a rather brilliant way—technology-enabled, self-directed, experiential. We put those folks up there on showcase and we challenged. We had rooms of 50, 60, 70, 80, 90—I think probably close to 100, in some cases—executives from the university and college sector, and really challenged them, to say, "Why aren't you deploying this?"

One of the faculty members from London and Fanshawe had—I'll never forget this. I'll actually share it with the committee members. You might be interested in

this. He had a hierarchy of the five ways in which students learn and faculty teach. He pointed out that in North America—not Ontario; North America—if you look at, and these are not my words, what in the business they call the sage-on-a-stage kind of model, that works for about 5% of students. They get a deep learning experience from that. Most of them just get surface learning from that.

He went through all of the ways and said, “Here are the four other ways.” He ranked them all and he showed the kinds of students. He challenged all of his peers, as Ian Clark has, as Joe Kim has, that we’ve got to start teaching the way the students learn and move—it’s not nuanced or subtle—from a teaching-centred system to a student learning-centred system.

This reform that we’re undergoing right now is really, if you asked me, in a nutshell—if you said to me, “Glenn, or Minister, what do you see this accomplishing?”, it’s really to change the dynamics in all of the ways—with all the tools that we have to bring innovation as a more supportive activity.

I think what’s happening in Ontario right now is that some of the best education innovators in the world are here. These folks are being contracted.

Our college system has done very well and our university system is starting to do very well at using their own expertise. There almost seems to be a deference amongst us Canadians, that we don’t want to believe that sometimes we’re the best. If you have a British accent or you come from California, some folks would suggest that somehow you’re smarter than the innately brilliant Canadians.

But I would suggest that the way we’ll do that is through the mandate letters, through negotiating those strategies and asking each university and college to do it.

I don’t think we need a made-at-Queen’s-Park prescription for this. I think it has to be a permissive system. But I think those mandate letters will really ask those institutions to define it.

I’ve asked the higher education council of Ontario, which is our body that reviews these, to panel experts and to review and evaluate each of those submissions and advise me on which institutions and what kinds of partnerships will accelerate that.

I’ve said that I think this is an important transformation. That’s one of the processes. I’d be very interested in other suggestions or ideas that people may have on how we can advance that.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Just very quickly, Minister, before we—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Leone, if you could hold that thought—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Can I have 30 seconds?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thirty seconds. I’ll go for 30 seconds.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Just to conclude on this point, one of the things I did earlier in the spring—Laurier and Waterloo had me over for a quality education thing they wanted to show. There was this really cool presentation by one of the professors who taught a course that walking is pedagogy. He taught a geography course. It was the most fascinating presentation I’d ever seen. There wasn’t one other professor in there to listen to it. So that’s the challenge I think that’s being faced by the whole system.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** You and I are on the same team on that one, I hope.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you for that point. It being slightly past 6 o’clock, we are now adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1802.*



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